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THE MODERN UNIVERSITIES[1]

' In general, the extrication of the best self, the predominance of the *humane* instinct, will very much depend upon its meeting, or not, with what is fitted to help and elicit it. At a moment, therefore, when it is agreed that we want a source of authority, and when it seems probable that the right source is our best self, it becomes of vast importance to see whether or not the things around us are, in general, such as to help and elicit our best self, and if they are not, to see why they are not, and the most promising way of mending them.'—*Culture and Anarchy*.

I.

CONVERSATION with lecturers or students at the modern universities concerning the education they impart or receive usually ends—if it has not begun—in expression of dissatisfaction concerning the prevailing 'system.' Answers to the question, 'What would you like to do about it?' tend to be vague and evasive, and it is usually added that ' everyone knows ' the main short-

[1]The inquiry into the Modern Universities, promised so long ago, turned out to be an even more difficult undertaking than we had foreseen. In the end we have, very unwillingly, given up the project of another ' scrutiny '—of following up our ' scrutinies ' of Training Colleges (*Scrutiny*, December, 1932) and School Examinations (September, 1933), with something equally documented and particularizing. The more cogent reasons for this decision will no doubt occur readily enough to those of our readers who have been most interested in the project—in fact, such readers have sometimes suggested them to us. Some such general opening of the issues as that offered here seems, in the nature of the case, the only politic beginning. We offer it in the hope of comment, criticism, and, in sum, collaboration, that will make it possible to carry discussion further in the next number of *Scrutiny*. Relevant correspondence (which we earnestly invite) should arrive as early as possible.

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comings, that the place in question isn't Oxford, and that—conditions being what they are—there isn't much that is worth attempting except to do a good job in one's own department. The objections—the reasons for *not* writing about the modern universities at all—are far from negligible. In a sense, of course, everybody does know, and it is true too that there are irremovable obstacles (irremoveable at least so far as this generation is concerned) in the way of any ideally satisfactory programme for university education in the newer centres. But it is precisely because a spirit of intelligent criticism already exists within the universities that an attempt at formulation is worth making. To make dissatisfaction explicit, and to relate it to a coherent idea of education, is the only way of canalising energy and of enlisting co-operation. As for the hampering 'conditions'—the circumstances that make education a more difficult task at, say, Manchester than at Oxford or Cambridge—it is these that set the problem, and they can hardly be used as an excuse for evading it.

There is of course a more radical objection: that any educational effort—particularly in the newer universities, where economic pressure is both more potent and more obvious—is doomed to failure in a chaotic society which cannot even use what educated men it has: 'What we should be most urgently concerned with at present is not the propagation of understanding but the disposition of power.' The reasons for finding this retort inadequate and misleading should have been, by now, made plain in these pages. We know that Capitalism—as represented by Ford, Beaverbrook or the National Government—is strongly anti-educational. But it is, I think, academic theorizing to assert—as the Marxists assert—that because England is a capitalist country the universities, in so far as they are not mere servants of the economic system, are impotent. To belittle the opportunities they offer may well prove an effective way of fostering a totalitarian state of mind; and certainly to ignore their potential value as schools of social thought and independent criticism is enormously to decrease the chances of intelligent social change.

The following considerations, then, are offered as steps towards the formulation of a problem which is not less urgent because its various aspects are, in a greater or less degree, already recognized.

The current use of the phrase 'the modern universities' is

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in some ways unfortunate ; it suggests a false as well as a true distinction. The modern universities differ from the older foundations in their circumstances ; there is no reason why they should differ in the educational ideals which they propose. By this I do not mean that they should accept the aims which may be current at Oxford, Cambridge or St. Andrew's at present. I mean that the function of the older universities should be to impart an education in every way as modern—one, that is, which prepares its students to cope with contemporary problems as adequately—as that of the most recent universities: these should aim at providing, not a brand of education labelled ' modern ' in the journalist's or copywriter's sense, but simply the best kind of education possible. The belief that universities founded in the nineteenth or twentieth century exist primarily to provide the more obviously utilitarian forms of knowledge (with, of course, English, History and languages thrown in for the benefit of prospective teachers) is one that has to be strenuously combated.[1]

The best kind of education possible ; this—with its suggestion of Matthew Arnold's inexplicit formulæ—was not used as a glib alternative to practical definition in terms of curriculum, teaching method and so on. Nor was it intended to suggest anything so foolish as that there is only one method which is the ' correct ' one for the university teaching of any ' subject.' What it was meant to imply was that there is one ideal aim towards which the major activities of every university, whether at Oxford, Glasgow or

[1] ' Created to minister to local needs and supported largely by local benefactions, they were naturally associated with local industries, and from the first laid stress upon the study of mathematical, scientific and modern subjects.'—*The Universities Year Book*, 1937. And a poster in the streets of Manchester recently proclaimed that, ' Manchester University will enable our young men and women to cope with the difficulties that foreign competition will bring on.' There is, of course, no reason why a university should not serve local needs in so far as these are not incompatible with the main function of a university. But in practice the requirements of local industry may tend to hamper the university's proper functioning. Flexner has some illustrations and trenchant comments on this point in *Universities : American, English and German.*

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London, must be directed unless the university is to betray its essential function. The actual means used may be different in different circumstances, but the only way of discovering what most needs *doing* is to establish certain positions in the light of an ideal which does not vary.

'How to produce the "educated man"—the man of humane culture who is equipped to be intelligent and responsible about the problems of contemporary civilization—is an urgent study, but a study that, apart from an adequate "Idea of a University" is likely to end in despair.' The quotation is from *Why Universities?*[1] where the remark is elaborated and pointed in relation to contemporary needs, but the short formulation will serve as a starting point. The essential function of a university is to produce men who are 'equipped to be intelligent and responsible about the problems of contemporary civilization.' It must then—a conclusion I believe implicit in the general statement—set itself to cultivate these qualities:

(a) A sensitive and flexible intelligence that can be brought to bear effectively upon the problems which concern the individual or the individual as a member of society.

(b) A potentially mature sense of values: an ability to respond to what the past has to offer (in literature and art, in philosophy and religion, in general ways of living) that may be of value in the present.

(c) A sense of the relativity of one's immediate standards—a sympathetic understanding of human modes essentially different from those that are familiar (something that is not incompatible with firm judgment).

(d) An ability to use with precision the instruments of knowledge in some field of human effort. This involves a special training in one or more of the disciplines that have been evolved to deal with the different aspects of life (physical science, psychology, philosophy, theology, economics, history, etc.) and it is at present the most commonly

[1]By F. R. Leavis, *Scrutiny*, September, 1934.

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> recognized function of the university. But the training involved under this head is likely to be mechanical, rigid and dehumanizing if it is pursued without specific and persistent reference to the three prior aims.

Unless a university performs this fourfold function—unless it turns out a fair proportion of men who are educated in this sense—it is not a university at all but a research institute, a technical college, or an establishment for the training of teachers. And it is worth remarking that although research and the training of teachers are both valuable activities they can hardly serve their own highest purposes unless they are carried on in close relation with a university where thought is less specialized and the range of reference more free.[1]

University education conceived in these terms would not, under the most favourable conditions, be an easy task. There are problems enough inherent in the attempt to educate for something more than a career. But the modern universities present particular problems. It is these we are concerned with here, and the particularly strenuous effort that they demand must be, in the first place, an effort of understanding—an attempt to see the conditions which set the problem in the light of the educational ideal.

There are a good many possible starting points, one of the most prominent being the tough cluster of economic difficulties.

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[1]Flexner says of the provincial universities that, 'The quality of the student body is kept down by the great preponderance of students expecting to teach; and honours courses in arts are swelled by the increased salary held out by recent legislation to those who win distinction in a given subject . . . The university tends to deteriorate into a teacher training establishment.' (*Universities*, pp. 249, 255). One cannot, perhaps, quarrel with this as a statement of fact, but the tone and implications are misleading. *As things are* the university with a large proportion of prospective teachers does 'tend to deteriorate' into a professional training centre. If it were generally recognized that the primary need of these students (like that of others) is to be educated in the full sense used here, that they are in the first place potentially mature men and women and only teachers-in-training in the second, there would be no need to consider their numbers 'excessive.'

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Many departments in the modern universities are seriously under-staffed. Adequate individual ' supervision ' is therefore impossible; and when teaching is mainly carried on by means of large lecture-classes there is an almost unavoidable tendency towards mass production. (As a teacher you have got to provide a certain amount of information and instruction for the benefit of the merely average student ; and in any case it is impossible to supply in lectures quite the same kind of stimulus that can be given in small groups meeting regularly).[1] And there are individual financial difficulties. Assistant lecturers usually get £300 a year and they are not only allowed, they are encouraged, to supplement this by taking on external work such as tuition for the W.E.A. or School Certificate examining. The majority of students, too, have only sufficient money to pay their university fees and to buy a few standard text-books. Inevitably they rely, more than they ought, on lecture notes.

These and similar points could be elaborated at length, and certainly no one familiar with the conditions will under-estimate the importance of the various financial handicaps suffered by colleges without endowments and students with a minimum of pocket money. But if we wish to see clearly existing conditions in the light of the proposed ideal and to grasp the essentials of our problem, it is a disability of a different order that needs to be kept most clearly in mind.

What most disables the modern universities as centres of education in its widest sense—the sense in which universities (as distinguished from schools of technical or specialized training) exist to provide it—is the fact that in many important ways they are not centres at all. They are teaching and examining institutions rather than centres of intellectual effort. It is on the bearings on education of this solid fact that one has to force attention.

We are brought back, sharply, to material problems, though they cannot properly be called economic since even the most liberal application of money, by the State or beneficent millionaires,

[1]It has to be remembered that at Oxford and Cambridge the teaching staff is not limited to the body of university lecturers ; senior members of the university who are not lecturers are also available as tutors and supervisors.

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would fail to remove them. Most of the modern universities are non-residential. There are 'halls of residence,' but these are hostels rather than colleges, and they are usually so far from each other as to make frequent contact impossible. Even more scattered are the students—the great majority—who live at home or in lodgings. If they are lucky they can reach the university in half an hour, by train, underground or bus, but very many of them come from outlying suburbs or neighbouring towns (in Manchester they come daily from Bury, Burnley, Preston, Crewe . . .) and then at least two hours a day is spent in travelling. What happens, of course, is that at 9.30 each morning students arrive for classes, and classes take up the greater part of the day. (Odd hours between lectures can be spent in the library or—since you know a bell is going to ring for you shortly—in gossip in the Unions). When lectures are over, at three or four o'clock, the students scatter to their respective homes or hostels, or they attend a meeting of one of the numerous university societies before scattering. But at latest by 5 or 5.30 the university is 'over' for the day. As for the staff—they are hardly to be blamed if they live as far from the centre of an industrial town as they can get.

Now it is not suggested either that these conditions can be radically altered, or that without continuous physical proximity it is useless to consider 'the idea of a university' in relation to the modern universities. What is suggested—is, in fact, insisted—is that centrality of some kind is essential, and that the conditions of the modern universities make it particularly difficult to obtain.

II.

The value of the education offered by any university depends on many related but distinguishable factors which—for the purpose of this preliminary sifting—may be roughly grouped under three heads. It depends on the nature of the formal instruction provided (the ability of the teachers, the curriculum, the general methods of teaching and examining); on the incitements towards and opportunities for self-education that are offered; and on the extent and quality of those informal contacts outside 'classes' which largely determine the prevailing intellectual climate.

Questions concerning the curriculum and courses at the modern

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universities demand separate treatment in conjunction with possible alternatives: it is hoped that co-operative discussion may make this possible in a later article. Here it is sufficient to say that, as at Cambridge and—in spite of 'Greats'—Oxford, the separate courses tend to be narrowly specialized: Honours students are required to take various subsidiary subjects, but these are likely to be determined by the exigencies of the time-table rather than by their supposed relevance to the main course, and the various subjects—for both Pass and Honours students—are not usually correlated in any way.[1] It is, however, on a less complex question, the educational bearings of general teaching methods, that attention needs to be directed first. Under this head, what most distinguishes the newer from the older universities is the fact that at the former the student receives little individual guidance in his work, or none; the main educational method is the method of lectures and note-taking. Distinctions must be made, of course, not only between different colleges but between different departments; in some places the proportion of seminars and discussion groups to lectures is considerably higher than at others—though a teacher is lucky if any of his essay classes contains no more than four members of varied ability. In face of the economic difficulties that have been touched on it is perhaps useless to complain that anything approaching individual tuition is wretchedly inadequate; there simply aren't enough teachers to go round. What can be complained of—and it needs to be said emphatically—is that almost everywhere the number of lectures is excessive. Many students attend twenty or more a week (say fourteen for the Honours subject, the remainder for various 'subsidiaries'), and sometimes the best part of a working day is spent in going from class to class.[2]

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[1] 'Professor A. N. Whitehead has deplored "the fatal disconnection of subjects, which kills the vitality of the modern curriculum." One may go further and lament the fatal substitution of "courses" for subjects in the mind and practice of lecturer and student. It is this . . . which turns so much of our work into impersonal grind.'—Professor P. Mansell Jones, 'Where Modern Universities are Wrong,' The *Criterion*, July, 1936.

[2] 'Lecturers think they can educate by lecturing. Students listen to lecture after lecture—perhaps four in a day, or even more—and

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The effects of this—on the taught, on the teachers, and on the quality of the teaching—are obvious. It is hard to determine where the damage is greatest. Lecturers who have to prepare four or five formal lectures a week (as well as to conduct seminars and other classes) may be inclined to stress their own inability to find time for original work. This is serious enough, but it counts for little beside the general debasement of standards—the derogation of the whole 'idea of a university'—which results from incessant lecturing. For the result is, unavoidably, the mass-production of B.A.'s. A lecturer may have the best intentions; the quality of his teaching may be high (though he is forced to give a certain number of cover-the-ground lectures crammed with 'facts' or authorized opinions disguised as facts); but he can do little to overcome the inert receptiveness of over-lectured pupils. What is offered as a critical judgment, a stimulating idea or a tentative opinion, is immediately converted into dogma by students in search of examination fodder (for a job depends on their degree results) who have no time to read or think.[1]

It is not, of course, merely to 'make their attendances' that students attend so religiously the dullest classes; there is the constant pressure of examinations. Here again conditions vary considerably, but it is not unusual for undergraduates to be required to pass three or four 'terminals'—some of them in two parts—at the end of each of the three terms in their first year. Since they assiduously 'revise' for these a fixed habit is acquired of regard-

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they get no chance to think, no encouragement to form judgments; there is no insistence on their "writing up a topic," on the expression of their own ideas, attitudes, preferences, etc. Some English students do about three essays in three years, and can even escape that if they wish.' This is from a senior lecturer at one of the greater universities, but the substance of the complaint is repeated from all sides. 'I find that on some days in the week some students attend seven lectures: 9.30-4, with half-an-hour for lunch.' It is salutary for a teacher who is baffled by the mechanical repetition of lecture notes in students' essays to ask the writers how much time they could spare from lectures in the previous fortnight.

[1]Many English lecturers must feel that the result of their best labours is to 'form opinion without educating taste.'

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ing examinations simply as a test of memory. What is memorized of course is the lecture note-book, and although lecturers are carefully divided into those who like their own 'stuff' repeated and those who do not, the scripts invariably show an alarming degree of uniformity—in the topics selected, in opinion, in the quotations used, even in the phrasing. The students can't be blamed for this. A minority escape from the treadmill and—if they are prepared to risk coming down in some other part of their course—cultivate a small patch of genuinely individual knowledge. But for the great majority excessive lectures and incessant examinations[1] form a vicious circle from which there is no escape. It is a vicious circle for the teacher too. He knows the urgent preoccupation of his classes with exams. and the small time they have for private study, so he is bound to make some attempt to 'cover the course.' As a correspondent remarks, 'so long as terminals exist to test attendance at lectures, lectures will be given to provide answers for terminals.'[2]

It is safe to say that by the majority of students at the modern universities education is regarded as a matter of attending lectures and passing examinations. Self-education inevitably tends to become mere cramming. For there is nothing—no academic influence of comparable strength—to counteract the pressure of the formal routine. 'The lecturer' is so rarely more than just that—an aloof presence who appears and disappears. When experienced teachers at different universities were asked, 'What opportunities are there for contact between teachers and students?' the replies given were substantially the same.

> 'Lecturers are rarely in their rooms for students to drop in and ask questions or argue; they're never on tap—they give their lectures and then disappear . . . Students fresh from note-taking for H.S.C. don't know how to study or what to read and—since they do not like to "worry" their lecturers—they lose their way for lack of guidance.'

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[1] 'Terminals' continue into the second and, sometimes, into the third year.

[2] 'The chief method of educating in modern universities may be resumed in the formula: Give instruction—test receptivity—classify results.'—P. Mansell Jones, *op. cit.*

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> ' Contact between teachers and students is quite inadequate —owing, of course, to the number of students. The teachers do spend a lot of their time with individual students, I believe, but usually when a student has some special difficulty and has happened to mention it, not at all systematically. Contact between teachers and students of different departments is almost non-existent, except where the curriculum has produced a formal over-lapping between them.'
>
> ' Opportunities for discussion between teachers and students? —This is the devil. One does what one can ; one entertains one's students a little ; one has societies. But there is at present no common meeting place . . . I consider it the worst side of this University that there is so little contact between teachers and students outside the classes.'

These are representative complaints, and they refer not only to the inadequacy of individual tuition (' One wants to triple one's staff to realize anything like the ideal.') but to the general lack of informal discussion between teachers and students. This is not a question of social amenities—though there is no reason why these should be neglected ; it is a question of education. No one pretends that Oxford and Cambridge are models of genial intercourse between senior and junior members of the university ; and such intercourse—where it exists—may be enervating as well as bracing. But, assuming that university teachers are interested and interesting people, it is plain that informal intercourse can be a potent educational force—helping the younger men to get their bearings in the world and in the world of taste and knowledge. At the closely grouped colleges of the older universities a slight stimulus, gained from meeting men with different and—perhaps—more mature interests, is sufficient to stir undergraduate thought and discussion. At the modern universities where such stimulus is most needed—on account both of the lecture system and of the general dispersal after lectures—it is almost entirely lacking. Individuals, of course, ' do what they can ' (' One entertains students a little ; one has societies '), but for many undergraduates who are trying to develop adult interests a university course must be, as it was for D. H. Lawrence, ' a period of disillusion and a progress in isolation.' Lawrence, during his two years at college, complained

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bitterly about the lack of contact between teachers and students. The latter, he said, were ' taught ' like schoolboys: there was ' nothing adult about the life of the college.' That, of course, was thirty years ago, but few university teachers would be willing to assert that it mightn't have been yesterday.[1]

This is all the more depressing, since, if a young man does not obtain essential education at the university there is small chance, to-day, of his finding it anywhere else—at home, or in any social milieu that the university town may provide, for example. The provincial capitals may boast of a cultural tradition inherited from the eighteenth century, but it is not now an operative tradition. (You are lucky if, in bookshops stocked with Book Society choices, biographies of the latest notoriety and the speeches of Earl Baldwin, you can find a recent book you want: foreign books have invariably to be ' ordered.') They are simply business centres and they exhibit all the symptoms, economic and cultural, of the dominance of middle-class acquisitive ideals. In such a setting the university's task is made infinitely more difficult.[2] And

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[1]See *D. H. Lawrence, A Personal Record*, by E.T., Chap. iii (' Student Days '). ' Lawrence entered College in a mood of wistful anticipation. He felt it might be a step into a fuller life ; he hoped for a lead of some kind, for contact with things that were vitally alive. In this he was acutely disappointed. He said to me before the course began, " Surely one should get *something* from those men," *i.e.*, the tutors. The truth was that he got nothing. He made no essential contact with any member of the staff. The nearest approach to a personal relationship was with a lecturer popularly known as " Botany " Smith. He apparently did perceive that Lawrence was an unusual individual . . . He even got so far as to be invited to tea at Mr. Smith's, but as Lawrence put it, " Botany's baby developed measles " at the last moment, so he never went to tea.

' The only member of the staff he genuinely admired was the head of the Department of Modern Languages . . . But there was never any personal contact. Lawrence merely admired this professor from a distance as a scholar and a gentleman.'

[2]A correspondent comments: ' "Coherence, unity of interest and intention " : such qualities are no longer attributes of the univer-

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the signs are that the modern universities—instead of providing the means of understanding and criticizing the environment—are more and more content to become an unquestioning part of it.

Lecturers are, in fact, already beginning to complain that the universities are 'the tied houses of commercial and industrial minds,[1] and the degree of subservience of any university to the needs of industry and commerce is something to be noticed. But there is a danger here of distracting attention from the essential issues. The modern universities are not at present—whatever the

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sities ; nor can they be in a world which presents such a kaleidoscope of incoherence, opposed intentions and interests.'

[1] 'As far as I can see they do nothing at this university that could be regarded as incitement to any serious criticism of what we should regard as the fundamentals of contemporary culture. Criticism blows off in the form of communism and practically nothing else. And in practice it is quite clear that the universities are the tied houses of the commercial and industrial minds. The universities persuade business men that a degree is worth having in business, so the young men are sent to get one. But it then appears that the things expected of them at the university don't fit in too well with the business outlook. Well then, the curricula must be changed ; we must have a B.Com. and we must lower the standards until the average young man in business *can* get one. Otherwise how can we reasonably expect the universities to play their part in the modern world? ' And from another place: ' I haven't heard of any " incitement to criticism ' or to " the understanding of the environment." I have frequently heard of " the opinion of the city "—of how we must take care not to offend ———— ; this is a card frequently played by one section. A great deal of our money is in ————'s, after all. It would be ungracious to bite the hand that cherishes us.' As a comment on the first of these quotations see a recent advertisement for a correspondence college: ' London University has recently announced a concession which will make the B.A. degree still more attractive. In future candidates need not include a language among their three subjects for the B.A. (General) Final examination. In many cases this should make the degree more easily obtainable. Full details may be obtained with free prospectus from ————.'

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politically minded may say—merely flunkeys of the capitalist system. They serve the modern world not by toadying to this or that 'interest' but simply by *not* producing a sufficient number of men who are educated enough to make any fundamental criticism of society as they find it. The divorce of 'education'—in its formal sense of attending lectures and passing examinations—from the needs of the growing individual is reflected in the standards undergraduates apply among themselves when they are free from the coercion of Authority. Students tell you that, for many, the accepted signs of emancipation from school are ragging, dancing and petting, and it is certainly odd to reflect that it is possible to obtain a high honours degree in English, History or Classics, and to go through life as a mere good fellow. On the other hand, where undergraduate interest in contemporary problems does exist it is commonly left to take the fashionable short cut. What a modern university does—or does not do—for potentially intelligent students is best described in the words of a lecturer at a college where undergraduate interest in contemporary affairs is unusually lively:

> 'Getting through the exam. is of course the aim at the back of all students' minds. But at ——— social and political interests leaven almost all the work that's done. In the department I know I think there's a little tension between the students' wish to find an immediate political application of all their university work, and the teaching staff's determination to see that the work is soundly based and right in general principle. On the whole I think the students are convinced of the value of this academic soundness, though they don't on that account feel that the political applications are less urgent. *My criticism of the results as I see them is that most students have far too much respect for solemn intellectual formulations of general principles, and far too little readiness to examine simple concrete affairs with sceptical intelligence.* Their intellectualism flows from a tap that can be turned on and off; during the university years it's kept full on all the time, but I'm perfectly sure it can and will be turned off. This is only to say that the course doesn't manage to alter the fixed fashion of the age—though I don't think it tries to, either.'

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III.

It is difficult to see how, under the conditions that have been described—the modern universities can hope to produce ' educated men ' ' equipped to be intelligent and responsible about the problems of contemporary civilization.' ' The conditions ' it is true, are of varying degrees of obstinacy. Some of the most hampering are not inherent in the system at all, and merely to reduce the number of lectures and to abolish ' terminals ' would be so much clear gain for education.

But even if this were done and if, as a consequence, lecturers had more time to encourage individual talent and students had more time to cultivate themselves, a far more radical attack on the whole question of ' education for living ' at the modern universities would still be necessary. For the problem that the modern universities have to solve has two main aspects. One problem is how to prevent education from becoming—or rescue it from being—a matter of routine, machinery and mass-production ; some possible solutions have been indicated. The other is—more positively—how to bring the different fields of knowledge into significant relation with each other and with the adult interests of men and women who are genuinely alive to the present ; how, one may say, to provide a substitute for that current of ideas which results from the conjunction of different specialist interests in universities where opportunities are more abundant. But one has to say too that if a modern university were to achieve only a partial solution of the problems of specialization it would have achieved something from which the older universities would need to learn.

The very urgency of the need encourages the hope that a solution may at least be sought. For at the modern universities it is clear that education, in its full sense, can only be the result of conscious planning by those who know what education is: it cannot be left to personal contacts and informal stimulus, and only a deliberate effort can overcome the disabilities imposed by place and circumstance. To discuss what form that effort might take is not a matter for one article, or for one individual. It would, I think, be largely an effort at co-ordination, an attempt to break down the fences which, at present, shut in

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each university 'subject,'[1] as well as an attempt to make each form of training more genuinely relevant to living needs. This is something that can be taken up again later. What I wish to emphasize here is that unless the right questions are asked—What are we educating for? What is the function of a University?—unless a conception of essential function can be made to permeate and direct the whole of university life, such education as the modern universities can give is bound to be narrowly specialized. And a specialized education—one, that is, which touches life at only a few points and leaves so many facets of the individual uncultivated—is not really education at all.

L. C. KNIGHTS.

[1] *cf.* Morris Ginsberg, 'Social Science and Social Philosophy in the Universities,' in the *Sociological Review* for October, 1937. Professor Ginsberg's article contains positive suggestions for university teaching which will be found valuable by others besides sociologists.

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A LETTER FROM IRELAND

THERE are two universities in Dublin. Trinity College, the elder, a contemporary foundation with Oxford and Cambridge, is residential, and poorer and cheaper than either of those. Traditionally Protestant, it now includes a large Catholic minority of students, in spite of the ban of the bishops, and has one Catholic professor. It is, in fact, the nearest thing to a national institution there is in the country, embracing North and South Catholic and Protestant, in almost representative numbers ; only the opposition of the Catholic hierarchy has impeded Catholics taking a more prominent part in college affairs. In the Free State to-day there is a belief that Trinity is Protestant and therefore anti-national, but actually the leaders of the national movement have frequently been Protestants, and Connolly's Irish Citizen Army was founded in rooms in Trinity College after a meeting had been turned out of the Mansion House by a Catholic Lord Mayor. There is almost as much Irish spoken to-day inside Trinity College as in University College, and it is a good deal less self-conscious.

University College is the other university in Dublin, and it is one of the three constituent colleges of the National University. These were founded after the Catholic emancipation in the last century and remain almost exclusively Catholic to-day. They are non-residential. Politically they are very much less independent of the Free State government than Trinity ; Irish is compulsory. Of the two other colleges, Galway and Cork, I know nothing, except that Mr. Thompson, classical fellow of King's, Cambridge. and now Professor in Birmingham, was formerly Professor of Greek through Irish in Galway ; he had to write most of his text books himself in Irish, and on one occasion came up against the censorship because a sentence in the preface to one implied a belief in evolution, and also against more general opposition. He resigned after five years.

My own academic experience is limited to attending lectures in Modern Literature in Dublin. I visited the Professor of English in Trinity and ascertained that no literature since the Victorians

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was studied, and that the Elizabethan dramatists were studied through the medium of Lamb's *Specimens* ; I asked whether he could help me to apply for a permit to import books proscribed by the Free State censor, and heard a dignified defence of the censorship. (The Censorship Act was introduced in 1929, and a list of the books banned to date may be bought for 6d.; it includes books from almost any good modern novelist: D. H. Lawrence, Dos Passos, Seán O'Faoláin, Liam O'Flaherty, Shaw, Sean O'Casey, T. F. Powys, Theodore Dreiser. Going through the list one notes that about a third of the books are genuine pornography, another third covers medical books touching on birth control, while the remainder are from authors such as those mentioned. Every quarter the list is added to). After this, I decided not to read English in Trinity. The French, Italian and Spanish lectures in Trinity, I found progressive and interesting, and very much alive to contemporary affairs. Lectures in French and Italian which I attended at University College I found pedantic, where not dull, and the atmosphere more that of a secondary school than of a university. English, however, I believe is good in the National.

Politically, Trinity is a little more progressive than the National, but not much. The illegal I.R.A., the extremist wing of the republican movement, numbers about twenty in University College, and only two or three in Trinity ; inside the universities they are not very active. Last year, a small but active socialist group was formed in Trinity, which though not recognized is also not yet banned by the Board. They held weekly meetings in college rooms and at the end of the year had about thirty members, including three or four from the National. This was in spite of attacks by prominent Catholic functionaries in Dublin on more than one occasion.[1] Membership of the legal Communist Party last year numbered one in each university.

There are three morning and two evening daily newspapers in the Free State. Of these the *Irish Press* was founded by De Valera's party, largely on funds collected in America, to be a paper expressing all shades of opinion within the republican movement. Since

[1]I now hear that during the current year the ' Fabian Society ' has been recognized and membership is considerably increased.—G.D.F., Florence, January, 1938.

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then it has become gradually narrower in outlook. Soon after De Valera obtained power its columns were closed to the I.R.A., whose too radical support was found embarrassing. Immediately after the recent elections, Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington, veteran suffragette and republican, whose husband, a pacifist, was shot in 1916, was informed that owing to her public opposition to the New Constitution is was now considered anomalous that she continue to write for the paper, but this ban was very soon lifted, and seems only to have been the result of post-election pique. Then there is *Independent Newspapers*, an organization embracing the *Irish Independent*, the *Evening Herald*, the *Sunday Independent* and the *Irish Weekly Independent*. The *Irish Independent* called for the troops to fire on the strikers in 1913, for the execution of the surrendered leaders in 1916, vociferated its support of the Free State in 1922 against the Republicans (then called 'Reds'), and, immediately on the outbreak of war in Spain, championed 'the Patriots' against 'the Republicans (then called ' Reds '), and, immediately on the outbreak of war in Spain, championed ' the Patriots ' against ' the Reds,' and published the full story of Franco's triumphal entry into Madrid some time in November, 1936. Nothing is too reactionary for its support, and when the ' Irish Christian Front ' was formed last year ' to combat Communism,' General O'Duffy and Paddy Belton found its columns ready for their fulminations. (It should be explained that ' communism ' is an all embracing term of abuse in Ireland, comprising everything from De Valera leftwards ; it is somewhat analogous to the use of the term 'Trotskyism' among English communists).

The *Irish Times* is the old Protestant and Unionist paper. Crude unionism is of course a dead letter in the Free State to-day, but the *Irish Times* is still read by the sort of people who read the *Times* in England ; it is a little more open to enlightened views. If it were less timid and if it cost a penny instead of twopence, it might build up a circulation on the lines of the *Manchester Guardian*. In its foreign news it is better informed than either of the two other papers, and, there being an arrangement with the London *Times*, it is well-informed on British policy. On home affairs, of course, it has not the contacts of a party organ like the *Irish Press* or the industrial ones of the *Irish Independent*. When the Spanish war started it was the only

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paper in the Free State to take the democratic side. The Assistant Editor was sent to Spain, and its columns were opened to controversy. Letters from prominent Catholics in Spain, Ireland and other countries, supporting the so-called ' Red ' government, were published, while they were refused by the other Irish papers. But it became difficult to persist in this courageous line. Circulation began to fall, and in one or two instances at any rate (whether typical I don't know) newsagents in country districts were informed that it was sinful to display posters for the *Irish Times*.

There was an interesting sequel to the Spanish news boom in Ireland. The *Independent* had got well away with stories of the ' Patriots' advance,' the *Irish Press*, like the Vatican, had cautiously waited to see which way the cat would jump, and missed the boom. But it was in the vanguard in opening a slum campaign, and this was followed up by the *Irish Times*. This exposure of living conditions in Dublin (which are really worse than in any other town in the British Isles) takes place at intervals of about five years, and in this case it lasted for nearly three months. Of course this agitation didn't induce the government to get anything done about clearing the slums, any more than any other capitalist government has yet done anything about slums, but the exposures did to a certain extent clear the air. They showed where the government stood, and they showed where some at any rate of the clergy stood in relation to the poorer sections of the population ; undoubtedly this contributed to the big Labour gain in the recent elections.

Among periodicals, the most alive during the last year has undoubtedly been the monthly *Ireland To-day*. The editor of this is a Catholic republican, whose views waver somewhat, and the paper was intended to give expression to the multiform voice of the younger Irish generation. In providing serious regular criticism of theatre, art, music and literature, it fills a gap in Irish intellectual life, and in addition it publishes articles of widely varying merits on questions of Irish interest, and original poems and stories. Difficulty arose over the Foreign Commentary which was supposed to keep readers in touch with events abroad. This was first entrusted to Dr. Owen Sheehy-Skeffington, French lecturer in Trinity, and a socialist pacifist, who provided interesting and personally informative articles on France and Spain. But when, as was

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inevitable, the magazine was attacked by the powers-that-be in Ireland, Dr. Skeffington was the Editor. Since then, it has again been necessary to change the Foreign Commentator, but the magazine continues to be attacked in the *Irish Independent*.

The quarterly *Dublin Magazine* sometimes seems more interested in bibliographical detail than in literature, and keeps cautiously clear of politics, but often publishes interesting new work by the older generation, by W. B. Yeats, Seumas O'Sullivan (the Editor), Oliver Gogarty, and occasionally by the younger writers as well. It is predominantly Protestant.

As far as I know there is no exclusively Catholic organ to attempt serious work ; in the shadow of the Irish Catholic Church, there are no T. S. Eliots, no Christopher Dawsons.

There are two good theatres in Dublin. The *Abbey* has fallen off a lot of late years, preserving its popularity by revivals from the ' Great Days ' and modern stage-Irish plays in the Lady Gregory tradition. Two exceptions of last year must, however, be mentioned, a new play by Denis Johnstone, *Blind Man's Buff*, and Paul Carroll's *Shadow and Substance*, a psychological portrayal of clashes in clerical life. Both were excellent, but it is worth remembering that Denis Johnstone was only recognized by the *Abbey* after the *Gate* had made a success of his first play, which the *Abbey* had spurned—hence its title *The Old Lady says ' No ! '*

The *Gate* was founded in 1928 by Micael MacLiammor and Hilton Edwards to perform notable foreign plays as well as new Irish work outside the *Abbey* tradition. Its range was therefore complementary to the *Abbey*, and their successes include *Faust* and Cocteau's *The Infernal Machine*, while Denis Johnstone is their best original dramatist. Recently there has been an unfortunate break with their formerly generous patron, Lord Longford, and now two companies divide the year—for the first six months of the year Lord Longford's company performed good second-rate work, while Edwards and MacLiammor played in Cairo. Now these two have started their Dublin season, while Lord Longford plays first in London and then tours the Irish provinces.

To pass now from organs of opinion to writers themselves is difficult. Only a few names can be mentioned here as indicative, not representative. Of the middle generation Seán O'Faoláin, Liam O'Flaherty, and Denis Johnstone seem to me the most important.

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O'Faoláin is, and O'Flaherty was, a Catholic. The majority of books by both writers are banned in the Free State. O'Flaherty has long since left the country to reside in England, in cynical scorn, but his last novel, *Famine*, a best-seller in Dublin before it was banned, shows a more serious and more mature attempt to grasp Irish problems than any of his previous work. O'Faoláin spends most of his time in Dublin, is a practising Catholic, though a strong anti-clerical, and is a busy and successful writer. As well as excellent novels and short stories, he contributes reviews and articles to papers in Ireland and abroad, showing a keenly critical interest in Irish life (see, for instance, his article 'The Priests and the People' in last month's *Ireland To-day*—July, 1937). Altogether he is the most optimistic of modern Irish writers. Denis Johnstone after four plays, three of which are undoubtedly of exceptional interest, has left Dublin for Belfast. Though he visits Dublin frequently and in spite of his recent success at the *Abbey*, there seems to be an inability in this writer to come to grips with contemporary realities. He has not repeated the universal success of his first two plays *The Old Lady says 'No!'* and *The Moon in the Yellow River*, and one cannot help feeling that the curiously neurotic characters so prominent in all his plays reflect something of the philosophical *impasse* which this writer himself has reached.

Of the older writers, W. B. Yeats, of course, towers above, an international as well as a national figure. It is worth recording, however, that outside Dublin he is little known and little read in the country. His brother, Jack Yeats, the painter, is better known. Jack Yeats, a charmingly modest and very approachable figure, lives on in Dublin, observing quietly, and has of late years quite suddenly expanded his technique, to embrace a new and very interesting phase of development. An exhibition of these later, expressionist pictures was recently held in London, but they are almost unknown in Ireland, where they are not 'understood'; fortunately, his reputation survives as the Christmas card painter by which he won fame.

I suppose Æ (George Russell) was the last of W. B. Yeats's real contemporaries. A year before he died he left Dublin to live in London, worn out presumably by the persistent hostility of Irish Catholicism to his 'paganism.' The co-operative movement to which he devoted so much of his energy had achieved almost nothing.

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Somewhat younger than the generation of Yeats and Æ comes the generation of *Ulysses*. James Joyce continues to live in Paris and is almost forgotten in Ireland, though any attempt to return might well be prevented by the stones of a priests' mob. *Ulysses* is not read even in Dublin. Seumas O'Sullivan has been mentioned above as editing the *Dublin Magazine*. As a Georgian and neo-Georgian poet, his output is small, but, accepting its limitations, of unusual merit. The development of Oliver St. John Gogarty, character of world-wide renown, is interesting. He has lately had to give up aeroplane-flying, partly owing to very bad eyesight, but more because he had destroyed the last private plane in Ireland by hitting a sheep while landing. Although he was prominent in the fighting to establish the Free State, he is bitterly disillusioned with the logical developments of Irish nationalism. Admirer of Hitler and Mussolini, close friend of Rothermere, Yeats, and General O'Duffy, and violent anti-semite, he has recently produced a book of haphazard memoirs, *As I walked down Sackville Street*, which, in spite of careful pruning before press, seems to have tripped up over the libel laws. It has been said (presumably by Gogarty) that this book is modelled on Dante, but reversed, Paradise under the English, Purgatory under Cosgrave, and Hell under de Valera. Poems also, scintillating with classical learning, flow freely from Gogarty's pen.

Sean O'Casey has not for some years resided in Ireland. As recently as 1936 there was uproar when the *Abbey* produced *The Silver Tassie*. Peadar O'Donnell, almost alone of the older writers has lived continually in Ireland. A Catholic, but a fierce anti-clerical, he is still very active in the left wing of the republican movement. Recently he has produced a book on Spain *Salud!* which is politically rather incoherent, but has some brilliant descriptions of scenes he witnessed at the outbreak of war while on holiday in Catalonia.

Only the very young poets have had the courage to break away from the Celtic Twilight tradition. Denis Devlin and Niall Montgomery have published some 'modern' poems and have also translated modern French verse (Breton and others) into Irish. I don't know Irish, but am told these translations are competent. This creative interest in language which is most typical of the National University is healthy and perhaps will prove productive.

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In Irish, I don't think much literature of note has appeared since Thomas O'Croghan's *The Islandman* and Maurice O'Sullivan's *Twenty Years A-growing*. Peg Sayers's autobiography was disappointing. Censorship may be something to do with this, as the Gaeltacht writers are apt to be too vigorously pagan. I know of one lively book of experiences which was refused by Government Publications on grounds of immorality and anti-clericalism. Except officially it is difficult to get a book published in Irish ; this book is now being translated into English. Opinions on the language question range in all sections of the population from uncritical enthusiasm to uncritical abuse. Most are agreed that government compulsion is not the right method, and I should say that without a radical economic change to set up industry and provide employment in the west it can never be a real success. The drain to England and the consequent commercial value of English is what is really rotting into the surviving Gaeltacht.

Politics is naturally a highly controversial subject. In a country as small as Ireland, personal and regional antagonisms play a proportionally greater part. One thing is certain : the situation is infinitely more complex and involved than a superficial view will allow. A ready-made formula, Marxist or otherwise, and particularly from an English point of view, just won't fit. For parallels we must look more towards Catholic and Latin Europe and to a country where the same anarchic individualism dominates life, such as Spain. With this reserve in mind, one may say, broadly speaking, that the change from the English to Cosgrave and from Cosgrave to de Valera has not effected the economic structure of the country. Emigration to America has stopped but the migratory emigration to England and Scotland from the whole length of the west continues. There is still substantially no employment to be found in the great majority of districts, in spite of the setting up of extravagantly subsidised industries under private ownership (boots, sugar, Shannon scheme). It has been calculated that the subsidy paid to the four sugar-beet factories would be sufficient to supply the population with imported sugar free. While this unemployment continues, no government can honestly call itself national. The changes so far since the treaty have been changes from foreign capital to Irish capital, and from large Irish capital under Cosgrave to small Irish capital under de Valera, but

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the structure remains essentially the same. De Valera has set up a handful of pocket industries, heavily subsidised, for private profit, but the bankruptcy of general policy is well indicated by the introduction of the New Constitution: while in no respects is this better than the old, in several respects it is worse. There is no guarantee of rights for women, and there is a clause for limiting freedom of speech when necessary. A special position is recognized for the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, and the property of religious orders is protected by a special guarantee. A President is to be appointed for seven years, with extended powers. All this may mean nothing, but it may be made to mean a lot on the road to the sort of dictatorship existing in Italy. Typical of the Jesuitical hair-splitting of the present government is the first clause in the Constitution: the name of the I.F.S. is changed from Saorstat Eireann to Eire!

De Valera was returned after the recent elections (though with a smaller majority than was expected) partly owing to the general feeling that there was no constructive alternative, and partly owing to personal prestige. However one may dislike a certain monkishness in his person, de Valera is not corrupt. The Labour Party almost doubled its representation, but would undoubtedly have been stronger still had it taken a bold stand over home policy and over Spain. An important gain for radical opinion was the return by a large majority of Jim Larkin, veteran and uncompromising syndicalist leader, though independent of any party. There was hopeless bungling on the extreme Left. The Communist Party, which is extremely small, decided at the last moment to put up a candidate, but stood down a few days later in favour of an Independent Republican, Frank Ryan, absent in Spain, a united front candidate of the Republican Congress and the Communists. The I.R.A. were issued orders to abstain from voting, but, had the campaign for Ryan been started earlier, many of them could certainly have been won over. The I.R.A. is a terrorist and abstentionist organization with a policy vaguely resembling the anarchists, although it has points in common with the Nazi Brownshirts before Hitler came to power. Discipline is their strong point as recent events in the North show, where twenty-eight frontier posts were destroyed simultaneously, in spite of extra vigilance on the part of an informed police. This was the occasion of the

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King of England's visit. The Republican Congress is a liaison formation, largely a peel-off from the I.R.A., under the leadership of Frank Ryan, Peadar O'Donnell, and George Gilmore ; policy is both nationalistic and socialistic, somewhat resembling that of the Indian Congress under Nehru.

A good deal of prominence was given in Ireland and abroad to General O'Duffy's volunteers for Spain. It is now possible to reconstruct more or less what happened. Between one thousand and two thousand men were collected, some of whom had served in the Free State army, while others had been members of the Blueshirt, or Fascist organization. They were enlisted for a period of six months' service and spent this time in Franco's Spain ; though they appear to have been on active service only once (on the Guadalajara front), they suffered severely from disease, and returned home after this period with a mortality of six. Less known outside Ireland is the fact that some two hundred Irish republicans under Frank Ryan went out on the side of the democratic government. They moved into action on Christmas Day, 1936, and, as their fighting quality was high owing to previous I.R.A. training, remained constantly on active service. Mortality was very heavy, though precise figures are not yet available.

This letter makes no pretence at being comprehensive, exhaustive, or even representative. I have no knowledge of Northern Ireland. I appear to have laboured the religious question, because since 1922 this seems to have penetrated every phase of Irish life ; the Orders own a large part of the land and considerable housing property, including slums; directly or indirectly they control almost all primary education and are closing up on the secondary—in one case recently a republican lay teacher was dismissed for holding views contrary to those of the clerics. The question of Catholicism or anti-clericalism is likely to be important in the future. I have mentioned facts and names which seemed to me indicative, but my choice has always been limited by my own scanty knowledge after one year's residence in Dublin.

GRATTAN FREYER.

[EDITORIAL NOTE: This Letter was written over six months ago, but has been held over till now for lack of space. It seems to us to have lost none of its interest, so we print it as it stands].

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THE COMPOSER AND 'CIVILIZATION'

NOTES ON THE LATER WORK OF GABRIEL FAURÉ

'Civilization is strength and not weakness. Look at the great nations of Europe and what they have endured. No savage could have stood the things they have gone through. It is their civilization that has given them such moral strength and courage. I do believe in civilization.'—Sibelius.

(Quoted by Bengt de Törne).

I.

THIS is an essay about the later works of Gabriel Fauré ; but the form which the essay might take, and the nature of the speculations it might give rise to, were suggested to me when I heard Beecham's consecutive performance of Sibelius's Fourth, Sixth, and Seventh Symphonies. After listening to this superbly concentrated music I began to ask myself why it was that this music appeared so powerful and civilized, civilized in a manner which is antipathetic to the facile *sophistication* typical of most contemporary music, and I thought that I found a key to Sibelius's secret in the simultaneously Beethovian and Mozartian quality of his art. For Sibelius's terse and 'original' symphonic form is related, as Bengt de Törne has pointed out on the composer's own authority, more closely to the allegro of Mozart than to the symphonic form of Beethoven in which there is a gradually increasing tension between the natively musical, and the dramatic, conception of that form. (Sibelius said, 'To my mind a Mozart allegro is the most perfect model for a symphonic movement. Think of its wonderful unity and homogeneity. It is like an uninterrupted flowing, where nothing stands out and nothing encroaches on the rest.'). And, when you think about it, this derivation from the

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form of Mozart—whose idiom was, after all, parochial as the condition of its being universal—suggests that Sibelius must enjoy the advantages of a civilization in some respects at least comparable with that of Mozart, whose music is probably the most civilized the world has ever known. You cannot fake any spiritual affinity with Mozart; and Sibelius does in truth possess, in his native Finland, a society concerned about the humane virtues, a nation which honours its great composer as a national hero. I suppose Sibelius is the last composer to be parochially sanctioned; and the majestic swinging melody which emerges, in the last movement of the Fifth Symphony, from the multitudes of developing and synthesizing thematic fragments, has a powerfulness and a sanity with which no merely individualistic expression can ever compete. The heroic note is not, on the whole, characteristic, for Sibelius is not really a 'communal' composer. But the urbanity, the terseness, the crystalline transparency and delicacy of structure, are intrinsically typical, and a tribute not only to Sibelius's maturity and integrity but also to the humane society that produced him.

Yet Mozart himself was an individualist also, he compassed more far-reaching passions than the virtues of social and spiritual poise which were implicit in his environment. By the time of Sibelius the gulf is wider, and more profound, and here we hit upon the real connection between his music and the final works of Beethoven. Finland provides him with a conception of the civic virtues, but cannot satisfy the complex range of his mature interests. The play of his critical intellect reveals his society as insufficient and unsatisfying, and he is, essentially, a lonely and isolated man of the modern world. Beethoven, too, became finally preoccupied with his *separateness*, and, in his last works, explored the metaphysical reaches of experience in the consciousness of his own untouchable uniqueness, however deep his communion with his fellow-creatures may have seemed to be. The conflict between submission and independence is the corner-stone of Sibelius's art as it is of the deaf Beethoven's; the struggle between civilization and individual sensibility, between the proud, austere individuality of his resilient melodic lines, and the precarious grip, yet transparent harmony, of his formal structure. This perpetual to-fro movement, freezing into a vice-like tension, is the clue to the piercingly anguished thematic development—apparently fragment-

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ary yet actually so subtle and civilized a whole—of the Fourth Symphony. This composition is the authentic modern tragedy, with van Dieren's *Chinese Symphony* and a few of his chamber works probably the only genuine example of tragic art which the twentieth century has created. And the miracle is that Sibelius, like Beethoven, does not stop here—that the vice-like grip is relaxed. The victory in the curiously ascetic Sixth Symphony and in the superterrestrial Seventh, is all with civilization ; yet we are not allowed to forget that the struggle has been bitter, that the victory is precarious.

Now I know that in discussing Sibelius I have put the stress in an odd, even a misleading, place. A just account of his art would *start* from the ' loneliness ' of those glassy melodies and would then proceed to examine certain factors which modify that first impression. To have tackled the matter as it were from the other end is perhaps to have belittled those qualities of personal poise, concentration and self-discipline which makes Sibelius's music the remarkable achievement it is. But I have deliberately made this shift of emphasis because I wish to call attention to facets of Sibelius's art which, though subservient, seem to me still very important and insufficiently commented on. It is only by considering his music 'from this angle that we can understand why Sibelius's case is of such enormous documentary interest—more representative, I think, than that of Bernard van Dieren, whose ' civilization ' is catholic and European, more directly intelligible than that of Busoni, whose ' civilization ' is cosmopolitan. I mean by this that we can see from Sibelius's example what the relation between the modern composer and civilization—if it existed at all—might be expected to be ; and I am using the term civilization to indicate concern for the higher humane virtues, virtues of spiritual deportment and æsthetic cultivation. When we have grasped this distinction I am trying to convey between civilization and sophistication we shall also, I think, understand some of the reasons why the music of Gabriel Fauré is so little appreciated, why all musical people, outside France, have been so tardy in according to him his rightful position in musical history.[1]

[1]A friend calls my attention to some remarks of Mr. W. J. Turner, in *The New Statesman* for January 1st, which are typical of the

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We can see eye to eye with the contemporary composer who may be civilized, cultivated, and at the same time isolated, in revolt ; but a composer of to-day whose music is *completely* civilized, itself the incarnation of a mode of civilization as well as a personal expression—as Mozart's music was, or even more as Bach's was—such a composer is too much for us to grapple with. We do not know how to tackle Fauré, how to square him with our niggling conceptions of the modern scene. At his best, in his mature works and above all the compositions of his final years, he attains to an intimate golden limpidity in which the note of personal accident or distress obtrudes—notwithstanding the individuality of the idiom—even less than in Mozart—a limpid force which can, indeed, be justly compared with the sublime autocracy of Bach. Yet Fauré is, in point of time at least, a contemporary composer ;

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attitude of most English music critics to French music generally and to Fauré's in particular. Mr. Turner trots out the usual twaddle about the 'ever-soothing *platitudes*' (!) of this least commonplace of composers, and speaks of the ' smooth, unctuous, mellifluous but totally insignificant Requiem.' My friend—a well-known authority on French music—aptly comments that it is ' difficult to imagine a falser set of adjectives to apply to, of all things, this supreme and flawless—and I would add essentially aristocratic—work.' Remarks like this of Turner's—and it is not an isolated example—make one wonder whether their author has any qualifications for listening to and writing about music whatever ; make one wonder whether his refreshing anti-academicism and horse-sense about æsthetics are of any value in face of an insensitiveness to particular impressions as gross as his often seems to be. In this case, for instance, there is surely more than a mere disparity of opinion involved. I know that no-one can prove that Mr. Turner is 'wrong'; if he can see no more in Fauré's music than he confesses we may pity but cannot help him. But what is really shocking about such remarks is not their irresponsible silliness but their abjectly ignorant, shamelessly blatant, *illiteracy*. One would have expected Mr. Turner to preserve at least the semblance of a decent humility.

To end this note on a more hopeful strain I will call attention to Mr. Constant Lambert's admirable and reverent work for Fauré in this country both as conductor and critic.

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which fact suggests that there is something peculiar about his civilization. It will be the task of this paper to try to define what the peculiarity of this civilization precisely consists in.

II.

In a way, the civilization that is Fauré's music is ideal ; that is to say it has no objective reality—such as Bach's or Mozart's civilization had—outside of the music. But at the same time it is not so incredible and miraculous a phenomenon as to be the creation of Fauré as an individual personality, but is rather the consummation, through this one individual, of many traditional facets of the French temperament. For the virtues of social refinement, of poise, æsthetic taste and cultivation, have always been congenial to the French sensibility and are present in all music of whatever century which is recognized as being characteristically French—they are the qualities which primarily distinguish the work of French polyphonists like Claude le Jeune from their Italianate contemporaries. The music of Rameau, Lulli, and Grétry is the music of the superfices of civilization ; Couperin, in his magnificent and only recently explored chamber works, revealed a deeper spiritual poise to match this surface gesture. During the nineteenth century an exquisite refinement of passion and intellect glows in Chabrier's very beautiful *Briséis* and *Ode à la Musique*, and is present in a cruder manner in Offenbach, Gounod and Bizet. To-day, we can sense the quality in Satie, in such works of Milhaud as the B flat Quartet, in the drawing-room composers Sauguet and Reynaldo Hahn, and with a curious significance in the work of Albert Roussel ; there is even a suspicion of it in the final works of Debussy, the super-individualist.

All these composers manifest mainly the graces and elegances of civilized intercourse. Berlioz, perhaps the supreme aristocrat of all music, allies these virtues of spiritual and social poise with passions more profound and terrible, but he is really an exotic product, too fiery and original a genius passively to submit to any one mode of civilization. The ultimate musical apotheosis of French civilization comes only in Fauré, who creates in his music French civilization as it ideally might have been. He effects this creation as an artist, a musician. He is more completely a professional musician than any other composer of the last two hundred years,

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almost as completely a professional as Bach, or as Palestrina or Marenzio or any other of the great Italians with whom he is also—as I shall show later—in a manner comparable. He is more sophisticated than these because he *creates* his civilization out of his own musicianship whereas they express their civilization—and of course their personal attitudes towards it—*through* their musicianship. (Palestrina made music in the praise of God as a skilled craftsman makes a chair). But he is a composer of the same genus ; if we do not recognize this, we shall find his mature music persistently baffling.

III.

The comparison of Fauré's music with Bach seems to me more to the point than the conventional comparison with the art of the Greeks. Of course, we can see that Greek art must have appealed to Fauré, as a Frenchman. He admired its concision and sobriety, its freedom from excess and enervating despair ; it is even possible that Fauré's own ideal civilization resembles Greek civilization in certain particulars—in its quality of *raison*, for instance, a word for which we have no precise English equivalent, since the quality has, unlike our twentieth century 'reason,' only a superficial connection with intellect, is more subtle than 'reasonableness' and more emotional than the eighteenth century implications of the term. Perhaps we might pertinently describe Fauré's art as Greek if we had any idea what Greek music actually sounded like ; but comparisons with sculpture are somewhat shifty ground to tread upon. I think we shall find that Bach and Monteverdi will serve our turn rather more adequately when we attempt to indicate some of the qualities of civilization which this music possesses.

To begin with, there are certain technical parallels. This statement may surprise those who know Fauré only as the composer of the early 'charming' songs, but it is nevertheless true. Fauré, a real conservative, started on his musical career, as did Bach, using those tools with which he was familiar by environment and upbringing. His æsthetic was from the start similar to Bach's, for he regarded music as, essentially, something that is *constructed*. He was a 'pure' musician, unimpressed by Debussy's emphasis on colour and hyper-tremulousness of sensibility working by way of harmonic innovation, and with no interest whatever in the

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' thrilling ' sonorous potentialities of the modern orchestra.[1] In the matter of variety of figuration and pianistic device there is, except perhaps in his very last works, nothing that would have alarmed Saint-Saëns or Schumann, nor did he play any direct part in the breakdown of the old system of tonality. His rhythms are not strikingly multifarious or unexpected, he showed not a glimmer of interest in the emancipation of rhythm which was led by such figures as Stravinsky. He created for himself a medium of extraordinary fluidity and subtlety by expanding traditional methods rather than by revolting from them ; essentially, he never revoked the methods of his immediate predecessors. We can see now what prodigious strength of character his placid resistance to Wagner and Debussy and the later *arrivistes* actually meant. Even those conservative rhythms, though they have not the proud solidity—the pulse, as it were, of a great age in which time was comparatively unhurried—of the rhythms of Bach, may yet be said to imply, equally, an ordered and civilized attitude to experience.

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[1]' Tone-colour,' which was excessively exploited by the Wagner-nurtured orchestrators of his time, seemed to Fauré dangerously like a substitute for the real stuff of music, but we must not glibly assume that because he seldom composed for orchestra he was therefore unable to. His habit of leaving the instrumentation of his incidental and dramatic music to other hands makes it difficult to decide how much of the alleged Fauréan orchestration is genuine, but the few indisputable examples are enough to prove that, though his sensibility did not often call for orchestral expression, he could on occasion masterfully adapt the orchestra to his own ends. The scoring of the Requiem, for instance—so unatmospheric, level and apparently ' colourless '—is superb, sensitive and alive to the minutest detail, and almost Berliozian in its finesse and clarity. It is a more interesting, because more significant, example of orchestration than any score of such a recognized ' virtuoso of the orchestra ' as Ravel, admirable as the latter's sort of ' Tennysonian ' sugar-and-spice instrumentation may be for the evocation of certain precise but superficial effects.

M. Koechlin suggests further that Fauré's indifference to the orchestra was not altogether independent of economic factors ; he might have written more orchestral work if he could have secured orchestras capable of performing his music sympathetically.

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Now Fauré transforms the emasculated academic idiom of his time (the idiom of Saint-Saëns) into an idiom of almost Bach-like potency by means of his virile sense of melodic line and his mastery of the bass. There is, literally, nothing in contemporary music that can be compared with the sheer force, the calm and ordered strength, of Fauré's melodies. They may have 'charm'—the quality ignorantly associated with all Fauré's work—they may be sensuous sometimes, tender or melancholy, but they combine, always, massiveness with their grace, and their latent energy is immense. Consider the strong, radiant profile, free from emotional chromaticism, of the first movement of the Second Violin Sonata, or the Andante of the Second Quintet—the latter remarkable for its irrepressible *length* of line, spirally evolving and strengthening, never relaxed. This sustained *élan* and directness of line, like a pure and inexhaustible jet of water, belongs to a world comparable to the golden clarity of Bach, and Fauré's device of unharassed ornament in his melodic repetitions is a direct transference of an important facet of Bach's idiom, to his own.

As in Bach's art, too, these winged melodies soar over basses of wonderful suppleness and elasticity. Melody and bass are mutually independent, yet mutually fructifying. Nowhere is the *power* of Fauré's mature art more patent than in this solid tension between melody and bass; delayed basses (*cf.* the Tenth Nocturne, or the songs *Je me poserai sur ton coeur* and *Dans la pénombre*) are managed with a facility and concentration which, unparalleled since Bach, gives even the most drab-seeming rhythms a glowing freshness and originality. Fauré's technique is based firmly on conservative musicianship; yet no idiom is more recognizably individual.

The composer has, however, almost no obvious mannerisms; the individuality I speak of lies in the whole structure of his melodic and harmonic thinking. Thus, although his uncontorted melodic clarity reminds one of Bach, his line is not exclusively diatonic but freely modal in a manner which is peculiarly his own but which has correlations with the Italian vocal composers of the late sixteenth century, particularly Marenzio and Claudio Monteverdi. Fauré does not write what the text-books call Modal Harmony. Modality is essentially a melodic medium; harmony in our sense of the term was only achieved by sacrificing some of the melodic variety and subtlety that modality gives. It is possible

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that composers like Monteverdi profited by a unique combination of circumstances in that they lived at a time when modality was decaying and merging into diatonicism and chromaticism, and Fauré shares with them an ability to make the best of both worlds without any insidious suggestion of vaccilating compromise.[1]

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[1]The shift from modality to tonality is best examined, of course, in the work of the later English polyphonists, and R. O. Morris's account, in his *Contrapuntal Technique in the Sixteenth Century*, of the disintegrating and reintegrating process as exemplified in their technique is easily the most lucid I know of. But Fauré, essentially meridional, has no points of contact with these composers.

A propos of the suggested relationship between Fauré and Monteverdi it is an interesting though not very important point that Monteverdi was considerably influenced in his search for a passionate naturalness of musical speech after the wearisome ingenuity of the decadent polyphonists, by contemporary *French* music—by the *chansonettes* of Jannequin and Claude le Jeune, the *airs de cour* of Tessier and Paul Cerveau, the *musique mésurée* of the *Academie Baif*. And it is, of course, untrue that Monteverdi's technical revolution was a specificially harmonic one. The possibilities of ' chromatic ' harmony—without what we would call any modulatory significance—had been investigated as early as 1550 by the theorist Nicola Vicentio and by Monteverdi's masters Ciprian de Rore and Ingegheri, and had been developed tentatively by Orlando di Lasso and Luzzascho Luzzaschi, and with greater brilliance and security by Marenzio. Chromatic harmonic experiment could hardly go further than in the work of Gesualdo ; yet his music is decadent in as much as its experimentalism is wilfully aimless and unsystematic—a reliance on the harmonic ' thrill ' that becomes, for all its originality and passion, in the long run a little facile. What makes Monteverdi one of the very great figures in the history of music is not this or that audacity or unconventionality but his prodigious faculty of assimilation and reorientation—his ability to select and systematize aspects of his art which only awaited the precise formulation of genius. If ever there was a musical ' genius ' it was Monteverdi ; the pity is that compilers of musical text books still can't forget that he was the Father of Modern Music.

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We can see that it was natural enough for Fauré to use plagal cadences in order to avoid the 'romantic' and emotional leading-note and to substitute the unresolved 4th for the 3rd in chords of the 7th and 9th, thereby producing effects of a characteristic tranquillity. But these are comparatively adventitious devices, and the intrinsic nature of his modality is manifested in the way in which, gliding rapidly from one mode—or curious scale which is neither modal nor tonal—to another, he effects very delicate elliptical key-transitions, so that one wonders whether his conception of modulation isn't as close to the 'cadential' conception of the polyphonists as to the key-relationship system of classical European music. In the modern sense of the term Fauré's final pieces 'modulate' so rapidly that they can hardly be said to 'modulate' at all; his line exists in a perpetual flux between tonality and modality, but this does not mean that it is looser than the line of classical music, only that it is more fluid and, in a paradoxical way, more rather than less subtle and highly organized.

This scalic freedom of line and mastery of ellipsis is the secret of all his harmonic complexity, the unique aristocratic tang. Except for a few false chromatic relations and unprepared 7ths and 9ths, his writing is 'technically' strict, and his harmonic dialect rooted in the practice of his forebears, yet, by means of these elliptical transitions and flexible basses, he can produce chordal sequences which are absolutely original and inimitable, though containing no chord which is extraordinary in itself. (Chromaticisms are infrequent). That beautiful and subtle song, *Le Parfum Impérissable*, is a fine instance of his typical harmonic processes; and it has a strange bitter-sweet, nonchalant, yet hypersensitive and delicately organized atmosphere which is curiously reminiscent of the spiced poignancy of some of Monteverdi's choral writing. Bach himself, sometimes but not often—in the *Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue* for instance—achieved, by means of his exploitation of chromaticism, a comparable quince-like subtlety. You can sense it, this *parfum impérissable*, as perhaps the most delicate flower of humane culture. And it is the sort of culture which, to-day, we find in the music of Bernard van Dieren, music which is otherwise not civilized as Fauré's is civilized since it is too poignantly and immediately contemporary. A culture, I have said, which is catholic, traditional, European.

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From the point of view of structure, Fauré's slow movements and most of his mature songs are related to the *aria* of Bach, and he has a Bach-like mastery of canonic imitation. His symphonic (or rather sonata) form is, like Sibelius's, an individual transformation of the Mozart *allegro*.

I make these comparisons as axes of reference to the *kind* of music Fauré writes. He remains Fauré, and his music remains French.

IV.

We might sum up our account of Fauré's technique as follows. The *strength* of his music is seen to be synonymous with his conception of an ordered, balanced civilization, a civilization as a completed whole, in a sense to which the conditions of the world to-day are not congenial ; and this ordered civilization is manifested musically in the *Bach-like* characteristics of his work, his spacious structure, his long, serene melodies and basses, his unperturbed rhythms and command of canon and counterpoint. The *charm* of his music is seen to be synonymous with his apprehension of the *parfum impérissable*, the exquisite flower of the traditional mediterranean humanities, a sort of culture that may, with difficulty, still persist in a man of the modern world such as van Dieren ; and this European grace is revealed in the Monteverdi-like characteristics of his art, the delicacy of his elliptical harmonies and modal transitions. His technique has an extreme density, an interior potency. We have established the general correspondences of the civilization his music incarnates, with the civilizations of Bach and of the Italian Renaissance respectively. If we wish to obtain a more specific notion of its nature—its essential ideality—we must turn to the consideration of particular compositions.

The early songs do not concern us here except in so far as the later manner is implicit in them. They are an extremely subtilized extension from the music of Gounod, the notorious relation to Schumann, presented in the text-book account, being, as M. Koechlin has pointed out, almost entirely illusory. The German *lied* had its roots in peasant art, the French *mélodie* is essentially artificial and, if it has any antecedents before Gounod, they are to be found in French key-board music of the seventeenth and

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eighteenth centuries. The *mélodie* was an art-form perfected, towards the end of the nineteenth century, as an exquisite medium for the expression of '*sensibilité*,' of the adolescent desires and lavendered languors of such an admirable period-piece as Chausson; or for the creation of the private world of regression—*la vie intérieure*—which came to be associated pre-eminently with Debussy. Fauré's own private world of paradisal parks and twilit balconies is surprisingly varied, ranging from the diffident, enigmatic elegance of *Les Présents* and *Le Secret*, and the nonchalant luxury of *Les Roses d'Ispahan*, to the chaste fervour of *Après un Rêve* and the luminous voluptuousness of *Nell*, while the verve and shapeliness of these melodies, the subtlety of modulation, suggests that in this private fancy-world of Fauré is the tiny life-sperm of that recreation of ideal French civilization which is to be his mature art.[1]

The first composition in which this re-creation is indubitably effected seems to me to be the *Requiem Mass opus 48* (1887). Here subtilized Gounod has become an idiom as individual, as potent, as that of Bach, though its range is, of course, slighter. Fauré calls for only a small orchestra and chorus and never once, not even at the climaxes, disturbs the tranquil flow of the music in which the harmonies are undemonstrative and the melodic construction of almost Mozartian simplicity; yet no composition of to-day—not Sibelius's last two symphonies—gives so powerful an impression of grandeur and nobility. Consider the bell-clear repose of the beautiful tune to which *Te decet* is sung, the finely moulded *Hostias et preces* with its background of evanescent, fluctuating elliptical harmonies, the simple, silvery line of the *Pie Jesus*, the

[1]In such a song as *Nell* the powerful structure of the melody is the one genetic force from which the completed song must 'inevitably' emerge. In any representative song of Duparc the interest depends rather on a subtly maintained *balance between* certain beautiful and expressive—but essentially limited because incapable of logically germinating development—melodic patterns and the somewhat precious harmonic patterns that accompany them. This account applies to the representative *mélodie* but not, perhaps, to the very finest of Duparc's songs such as the *Elegie* or the *Invitation au Voyage*.

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poised melody of the *Tremens factus* with its gently grim pizzicato accompaniment. Here is no accent of fear, no sarcasm, no grotesquerie ; ' no external effect (to quote Nadia Boulanger) detracts from its sober and somewhat severe expression of grief ; no disquiet or agitation disturbs its profound meditation, no doubt tarnishes its unassailable faith, its quiet confidence, its tender and peaceful expectation . . . a sorrow so near to God that it is without revolt, cry or gesture.' The *Requiem* is a vision of tenderness and love culminating in an *In Paradisum* worthy of Fra Angelico ; yet its faith is not Christian exactly, for there is no suggestion of a life beyond the grave. The music is not metaphysical ; it takes account of spiritual issues, since without a recognition of spiritual values no society can be truly human and humane. But its spirituality is limited by the bounds of civilized human existence, its religion is an idealized humanism for an ideal human society—a quintessence of mediterranean culture. Its faith is philosophic, not dogmatic, like Bach's, but it shares his nobility, his apparent serenity. Apparent, and deceptive because, as M. Koechlin has remarked, it is difficult to find any music, since the great composers of the Roman Church and the chorales of Bach, as externally grave and simple, with such internal stress and fire.

The *Requiem* gives us Fauré the exquisite, the elegant, in whom exquisiteness is linked with austerity. For the authentic Fauréan *power* we have to wait until the superb song cycle *La Bonne Chanson* (Verlaine), opus 61, the Sixth and Seventh Piano Nocturnes opus 63 and opus 74, and the dramatic work *Promethée*, opus 83. This is music of intense lyrical passion, with much greater abundance of detail though firmly and spaciously constructed—music resplendent and clear in *Promethée*, sultry and ecstatic in the piano pieces, in the song cycle of almost delirious joyfulness and candour.

In the works of the final years—the compositions to which my account of Fauré's technique principally applies—a complete synthesis is achieved between these modes of exquisite austerity and joyous strength. These works include the song cycles *La Chanson d'Eve* (opus 95), *Le Jardin Clos* (opus 106), *Mirages* (opus 113), and *L'Horizon Chimérique* (opus 118) ; the Piano Trio, the Second Quintet, the Second Violin Sonata, the String Quartet, the piano *Preludes* and the later Nocturnes and

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Barcarolles. Here, with such a song as *Inscription sur le sable* or *Danseuse*, Fauré wonderfully evokes the infinite and eternal rooted in the human and humane, through the medium of his austere arias and shifting harmonies. The gravity and lyricism, the ardour and reticence, the tormented energy and philosophic serenity, are ever more inextricably interlinked. The luminous radiance of the first movement of the Second Quintet ; the bounding naïveté, the pure *premier matin du monde* atmosphere—perhaps related to the candour of the traditional French nursery song—of the finale of the Second Violin Sonata ; the sad dignity of *L'Horizon Chimérique* ; all these are ostensibly of the same world, a world in which things are visualized in bright daylight, unclouded by the mists of imagined profundities. There are real profundities beneath the direct *élan* of theme and structure ; but even the undertones are sunlit.

In the very last works, perhaps, the radiance diminishes. There is a strange descending mournfulness in the mirror-like stillness and poignantly undulating figurations of the incomparable *Danseuse*, in the gravely shaped lines, the curious scales and flexing nuances of that beautiful funeral oration the Eleventh Nocturne, in the glassy four-part writing of the Thirteenth Nocturne and of the String Quartet—a funereal accent which is new to Fauré's music. This is a sombre enigmatic art, stark and impersonal, yet containing an infinite lugubriousness and lassitude. In the fluttering harmonies of the last Barcarolle (No. 13) there is even a suggestion of twilight, of something tremulous, nostalgic, and phantasmogoric, like a scene viewed between sleeping and waking—a phenomenon very odd in a music habitually so maturely civilized, so effulgent with daylight clarity.

And I think we can understand how this should be so if we remember that Fauré is the *consummation* of French civilization, that he did not appear until those native qualities of sensibility which had made French civilization what it was, and had made Fauré's ideal civilization possible, were, if not on the point of dispersal, at least becoming tarnished by extraneous influences. So that, although Fauré's music represents a victory of civilization, it is also at the same time an elegy, and I suspect that the composer was aware of this, emotionally if not intellectually, at the time when he wrote his final works ; his music has the ripeness, the

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gloss, of an autumnal fruit. In this connection Fauré's work bears a curious resemblance to the poetry of another great conservative, Paul Valéry. The luminous images and shifting undertones of rhythm of *Cimetière Marin* have the same atmosphere as the almost blinding clarity of vision, and the bitter-sweet harmonic quiverings, of Fauré's music, and it is possible that Fauré occupies in the history of French music a position analogous to that occupied by Valéry in the history of French literature. Both are creators of civilization, guardians of tradition, and, in a sense, artists of the elegiac. ' Density ' and ' interior potency ' are terms applicable to the technique of both poet and composer. The correspondences are, of course, vague and general, but I think they are worth noticing.

The comparison with Valéry suggests other reasons for the hostility, or indifference, of the general public to Fauré's art. *Je dois compter vingt ans pour qu'une de mes œuvres soit apprécié du public* he said, and accepted this state of affairs with diffident resignation. Because he creates an organized vision or an objectified body of experience, as it were out of himself, he is a difficult composer to listen to. It is necessary to listen to him attentively for, like Valéry, he disdains facility, and the surface effect. His idiom, so consummately constructed, yields its full flavour only with familiarity, and it is so subtle and reticent an idiom that it is likely to repel those who have not a certain measure of general cultivation. His mature work, with the possible exception of the mondain, but elegantly distinguished, Valses Caprices, is uniformly serious and pure in style, making no concession to the fancy or cruder emotional responses ; his indifference to the public fortunes of his music, his supreme disregard of public opinion, is difficult to parallel in an age in which composers seek consolation for their lack of popular appreciation in the formation of cliques and the cultivation of a pert smart-alecism.

Yet we are beginning to respond to this proudly idealistic art. Pornographic instrumentation and the shriekings of freak orchestration have lost their thrill, and now that rhythm has been emancipated nobody knows what to do with it. Composers like van Dieren and Sibelius have given to their art a new humility and musicality, and have striven to reconcile its present with its past. We see now, I think, that Fauré's art is far and away the

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most important thing that has happened in French music since Berlioz, and one of the few 'imperishable' monuments of his time. He shows us, in the ordered bodying forth of experience which is his music, a civilization not quite of our time, stronger and calmer than our time and for that reason immensely valuable for us. *L'artiste doit aimer la vie et nous montrer qu'elle est belle. Sans lui, nous en douterions.* Fauré himself made this simple, if pretentious, claim for his art, and he would have wished no greater satisfaction than to know that we are coming to believe that his music falls but little short of his promise. There is not much music altogether, and almost no contemporary music at all, for which a similar claim could be substantiated.

And Fauré's music—of this there is no doubt—can never become dated. He taught us one great lesson, that construction, as Baudelaire said, is the one and only sure guarantee of the mysterious life of the workings of the mind.

Fauré died over fifteen years ago. Unrecognized for so long, his work should to-day be studied by any conscientious musician, and his relevance, his importance, is likely to increase in the near future. Yet the values he stood for, immensely important in themselves, have no longer quite the same significance or the same urgency, 'civilization' becomes at once a more complicated and a less subtle ideal. A composer the native mould of whose sensibility was similar to Fauré's, would write, to-day, music *essentially* different from Fauré's; he would write, I think, music rather like that of Albert Roussel. It is, anyway, through the consideration of this remarkable composer's work that I wish, at a later date, to continue these investigations about the relationship between the composer and civilization in the modern world.

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'THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY' AND THE MORALITY TRADITION

TOURNEUR'S plays have too often been described as if they were texts for illustration by an Aubrey Beardsley. They have suffered as a result. Symonds read *The Revenger's Tragedy* as a melodrama with agreeable thrills and some needless moralizing ; and, on this reading, it was not difficult for William Archer, applying the standards of naturalism, to make the play appear ludicrous. Though Mr. Eliot has supplied a corrective by pointing out that the characters are not to be taken as studies in individual iniquity, but as figures in a pattern with a poetic life of its own, his essay on Tourneur again misrepresents him. He is made ' a highly sensitive adolescent with a gift for words . . . '

> ' The cynicism, the loathing and disgust of humanity, expressed consummately in *The Revenger's Tragedy*, are immature in the respect that they exceed the object. Their objective equivalents are characters practising the grossest vices ; characters which seem merely to be spectres projected from the poet's inner world of nightmare, some horror beyond words. So the play is a document on humanity chiefly because it is a document on one human being, Tourneur ; its motive is truly the death motive, for it is the loathing and horror of life itself.' (*Selected Essays*, p. 189).

This is the reading of the 'nineties again. Tourneur's poetry, however, unlike the Romantic poetry of decadence, has a firm grasp on the outer world. Cynicism, loathing, and disgust there are in *The Revenger's Tragedy* ; but if Tourneur were merely giving expression to a neurotic state of mind, he could hardly have written successful drama at all. The ' object ' of his disgust is not the behaviour of his characters, singly or together, so much as the process they represent, the disintegration of a whole social order. It is this theme, particularized and brought to life by the verse,

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that shapes the pattern of the play ; and it is developed with the coherence, the precise articulation, of a dramatist assured that his symbols are significant for his audience as much as for himself. Tourneur is writing in the contemporary Revenge convention ; but behind the Revenge plays is another dramatic influence, working in harmony with Tourneur's narrowly traditionalist outlook, that of the Moralities. *The Revenger's Tragedy* is a logical development from the mediæval drama.

The Moralities had been the staple of popular drama when Marlowe began writing, and their methods were absorbed into the blank verse narrative play. That they were absorbed, not abandoned, is clear from *Faustus* ; and Mr. Knights has pointed out that their influence on Jonson and his contemporaries was considerable and varied.[1] They offered the Elizabethans a group of stock situations, types, and themes which had been utilised for the representation of social and religious problems throughout the changes of a century ;[2] and the later drama could rely on their familiarity in presenting fairly complex situations simply and effectively on the stage. The Morality influence makes itself felt, under the Senecanism and the literary satire, through the conventions of the Revenge plays themselves, and in *The Revenger's Tragedy* most strongly of all. The characters in the Moralities are personified abstractions and moral or social types, representing the main forces making for or against the

[1]See *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson*, p. 188 ; and *cf.* M. C. Bradbrook, *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy*, p. 70.

[2]The Moralities afforded a vehicle for moral and social criticism to Catholic humanists like Medwall, writing at the end of the fifteenth century, and to Protestant reformers like Lupton, writing in the middle of Elizabeth's reign. They themselves drew on the earlier mediæval drama. The later Moralities have been unduly neglected ; there is an excellent account of them by Louis B. Wright in *Anglia*, Vol. LIV. Some have been republished in Hazlitt's Dodsley ; two of the best, G. Wapull's *The Tyde Taryeth No Man* (printed 1576), and T. Lupton's *All for Money* (printed 1578), have been republished in the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, in Vols. XLIII and XL respectively.

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salvation of the individual and social stability ; they have no dramatic functions outside the doctrinal scheme. The actions on the stage are symbolic, not realistic, and the incidents are related to each other logically, as parts of an allegory, or as illustrations of the argument. *The Revenger's Tragedy* is constructed on closely similar lines. Miss Bradbrook has analysed the narrative into ' a series of peripeteia,' representing ' the contrasts between earthly and heavenly vengeance, and earthly and heavenly justice '[1]—linked as the parts of an allegory rather than as a natural sequence of events. The characters are exclusively the instruments of this movement, and it is from this point of view that they explain themselves to the audience ; their speeches reveal their world, rather than individual minds. The Duke and his court are simply monstrous embodiments of Lust, Pride, and Greed ; Vendice and the other revengers, despite the intensely personal tone of their speeches, are portrayed in the same way. The characters' motives are generalized and conventional—Lussurioso, for example, is an extreme case of Pride and Lust—and many of the speeches are general satiric tirades, spoken in half-turn towards the audience. This is a narrower dramatic pattern than Marston's, and more like those of the Moralities ; but Tourneur gains in dramatic coherence from the earlier examples. With Jonson, he was the last writer to apply them successfully.

' I see now,' says Ambitioso in the underplot—the traditional comic underplot in which the Vices are confounded—' there's nothing sure in mortality, but mortality.' The contrast between the skeleton and the specious overlay provided by wealth and sensuality is fundamental to Tourneur and the Morality-writers alike. When Pride, in Medwall's *Nature*, leads Man to debauchery, he prepares for him ' a doublet of the new make ' :

> Under that a shirt as soft as silk,
> And as white as any milk
> To keep the carcase warm.

These lines might have provided Tourneur with his text. Medwall, however, writes with an equanimity, a sense of security in the values of Nature, that Tourneur has lost. His sense of decay, of the skull, is overpowering :

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[1] *Themes and Conventions*, Chapter VII.

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Advance thee, O thou terror to fat folks,
To have their costly three-piled flesh worn off
As bare as this ; for banquets, ease, and laughter
Can make great men, as greatness goes by clay ;
But wise men little are more great than they.

The Stoical conclusion is feeble beside the savage intensity of the first lines. Death has triumphed, and the only course left open to Vendice is to convert a horrified recoil into a grim acceptance, turning the forces of death against themselves. Nevertheless, the fascination of physical decay has not corrupted Tourneur's satiric purpose ; there is nothing mechanical in Vendice's wielding of the lash. The changes of tone in this first soliloquy with the skull imply an attitude active and controlled:

When two heaven-pointed diamonds were set
In those unsightly rings—then 'twas a face
So far beyond the artificial shine
Of any woman's bought complexion,
That the uprightest man (if such there be
That sin but seven times a day) broke custom,
And made up eight with looking after her.
O, she was able to ha' made a usurer's son
Melt all his patrimony in a kiss ;
And what his father fifty years told,
To have consumed, and yet his suit been cold.
But, O accursed palace!
Thee, when thou wert apparelled in thy flesh,
The old duke poisoned . . .
O, 'ware an old man hot and vicious!
' Age, as in gold, in lust is covetous.' (I, i).

The contrasts between life and death, between natural virtue and the effects of lust and greed, are not merely presented—they are shown as a unified process in Vendice's mind, a process which extends through the whole world of the play. The imagery associated with the skull is concrete, exact, and dramatically useful; Tourneur builds up a system of relationships between images and situations which gains in cumulative effect—these lines, for example, have a bearing on the ironic undertones of the scene where the Duchess tempts Spurio, who is wearing her jewel in his ear (' . . .

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had he cut thee a right diamond . . . '), and, again, on the second appearance of the skull, poisoned with cosmetics. The pun in the first line is flat, but not extraneous ; it emphasizes the way in which the symbols are to be taken—the physical world is treated, in a peculiarly direct and consistent manner, as emblematic of the moral order, man in relation to the divine will. This moral order is rigidly identified with the traditional social hierarchy of ranks and obligations ; but the narrowness of Tourneur's outlook makes for concentration, and his poetic material is ranged and ordered by reference to the experience of society as a whole. In this passage, the physical contrast between the ' diamonds ' and their sockets, visible on the stage, prepares for, and supports, the crude cynicism of the parenthesis, which marks the change of tone. The complete degeneration of virtue is represented by placing the ' usurer's son ' on the same footing of sensuality as ' the uprightest man,' the mock inflation overturning any protest from respectability. Here, however, the tone changes again: the ' patrimony,' by implication the ill-gained result of greed, is itself ' melted ' away, and, though virtue cannot be reinstated, divine justice is vindicated in the rhyme. Vendice's tone mounts again as he reverts to the palace ; but the Duke, with the ' infernal fires ' burning in his ' spendthrift veins,' has already been paralleled with the usurer's son—the two types of social disintegration are juxtaposed throughout the play—so that Vendice's exultant determination on revenge appears as part of an inevitable cycle of feelings and events.

The trite ' sentences ' at the end of Tourneur's most passionate speeches are meant to enforce this sense of inevitability by lowering the tension and appealing to the commonplace. Tourneur himself calls them ' conceits,' and continually draws attention, in Marston's manner, to his virtuosity in using them. The resemblance to Marston, however, is only superficial ; they are more closely akin to the popular moralists and the Morality writers. Vendice's emblem is an example:

> ' A usuring father to be boiling in hell, and his son and heir with a whore dancing over him ' :

Again:

> O, you must note who 'tis should die,

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> The duchess' son! she'll look to be a saver:
> 'Judgment, in this age, is near kin to favour.' (I, iv).
>
> Could you not stick? See what confession doth!
> Who would not lie, when men are hanged for truth?
> (V, i).

These popular aphorisms and tags of Seneca Englished gave Marston and Tourneur a large part of the raw material from which their more ambitious speeches are developed. But while Marston works up his material as a self-conscious litterateur, Tourneur adheres to the Morality mode. The language of the latter is plain and colloquial, but adequate, as a rule, to the simple didactic purpose; a speech to the audience from Lupton's *All for Money* is typical:

> Is not my grandfather Money think ye of great power
> That could save from hanging such abominable whore,
> That against all nature her own child did kill?
> And yonder poor knave that did steal for his need
> A few sort of rags, and not all worth a crown,
> Because he lacks money shall be hanged for that deed,
> You may see my Grandsire is a man of renown:
> It were meet when I named him that you all kneeled down.
> Nay, make it not so strange, for the best of you all,
> Do love him so well, you will come at his call.

The audience is included in the framework of the play, the function of the speeches being to expound the theme to them from their own point of view. Marston's sophisticated railing has quite a different effect; it draws attention to itself:

> *Pietro:* Tell me; indeed I heard thee rail—
>
> *Mendoza:* At women, true; why, what cold phlegm could choose,
> Knowing a lord so honest, virtuous,
> So boundless loving, bounteous, fair-shaped, sweet,
> To be contemn'd, abused, defamed, made cuckold!
> Heart, I hate all women for't; sweet sheets, wax lights, antique bed-posts, cambric smocks, villanous curtains, arras pictures, oiled hinges, and all the tongue-tied lascivious witnesses of great creatures' wantonness. (*The Malcontent*, I, vii).

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The lively phrasing here is at odds with the ostensible moral purpose —it is true that Mendoza is gulling Pietro, having cuckolded him himself, but his speech is in the same style as the Malcontent's own speeches ;—the literary exhibitionism accompanies a confusion of dramatic motives. Tourneur's railing is more surely realized ; it is presented in the older and simpler dramatic mode:

Vendice : Now 'tis full sea abed over the world:
There's juggling of all sides ; some that were maids
E'en at sunset, are now perhaps i' the toll-book.
This woman in immodest thin apparel
Lets in her friend by water ; here a dame
Cunning nails leather hinges to a door,
To avoid proclamation.
Now cuckolds are coining apace, apace, apace, apace!
And careful sisters spin that thread in the night
That does maintain them and their bawds i' the day.

Hippolito : You flow well, brother.

Vendice : Pooh! I'm shallow yet ;
Too sparing and too modest ; shall I tell thee?
If every trick were told that's dealt by night,
There are few here that would not blush outright.

The direct appeal to the audience, as Miss Bradbrook remarks, is bathetic (*op. cit.*, p. 173) ; but it is significant of the condition of success for the first speech, Tourneur's single-minded attitude towards subject and audience together. The shaping influence is that the Moralities, transmitted directly through Jonson.

It was this influence which enabled him to use the Revenge conventions so successfully. His main preoccupations appear in his first work, *The Transformed Metamorphosis*, clumsily set forth in the form of a vision. The institutions of church and state, and even the objects of the physical world, are perverted from their original and proper functions ; Pan, for example, the church, has become a ' hellish ill o're-mask'd with holiness '—' Pan with gold is metamorphosed.' The Prologue describes the poet's bewilderment at the Cimmerian darkness in which he finds himself:

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Are not the lights that Jupiter appointed
To grace the heav'ns, and to direct the sight,
Still in that function, which them first anointed,
Is not the world directed by their light?
And is not rest, the exercise of night?
Why is the sky so pitchy then at noon,
As though the day were govern'd by the Moon?

This has the naïvety, the misplacement of emotion, that finds its counterpart in the cynicism of *The Revenger's Tragedy*. The conceits are painstakingly clumsy because Tourneur is genuinely bewildered ; he treats them as if they were literal statements of fact. It is evident, however, that they are not affectations of style, as with many of his contemporaries, but organic parts of his thought. The symbolism of the poem reappears in the play, in the pervasive imagery of metamorphosis, falsification, and moral camouflage. It has been thoroughly assimilated to the rhythms of dramatic speech :

Last revelling night,
When torch-light made an artificial noon
About the court, some courtiers in the masque,
Putting on better faces than their own,
Being full of fraud and flattery . . . (I, iv).

Ha, what news here? is the day out o' the socket,
That it is noon at midnight? the court up? (II, iv).

The details are worked out in relation to a central group of metaphors, repeated, on the level of action, in the disguises and deceptions which compose the plot. Here again, the method is derived from the Moralities.

These disguises and deceptions are symbolic, not naturalistic—an occasion is even created for making Castiza herself appear in a false character. Vendice is disguised three times—when, as Piato, he enters ' the world ' and becomes ' a man o' the time,' a court pander ; a second time, when he appears as a fantastic ' character ' of himself, a melancholy, litigious scholar ; and finally, as a masquer. The disguises are distinguished from the disguiser ; what Vendice does in his assumed roles affects his character as Vendice,

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but the relationship is circumscribed and conventional ; no provision is made to render it plausible, realistically, that Vendice would or could have sustained his roles.[1] When he tempts his sister, he is not Vendice in disguise, he is Vendice-become-Piato ; Piato and Vendice are sharply distinguished. Nevertheless, Vendice suffers for what Piato has to do ; and the separate roles, moreover, are complementary to each other. At first, Vendice is the honest malcontent, the nobleman wronged and depressed by poverty ; then he becomes a member of the society that has wronged him. He is sardonically aware of himself in his role, as if necessity, not policy, had changed him, just as it threatens to change his mother—(this is the way in which Flamineo and Bosola fuse the roles of villain and critic). He is morally involved in his actions as Piato ; and when he appears in the conventional fatal masque, he is justly the victim as well as the instrument of heavenly vengeance. The second disguise is a caricature of his original position. Thus the different roles are not linked together by reference to circumstantial probability, but by reference to the dramatic and social functions of the original character, as with Edgar in *Lear*. The disguisings are related symbols of a transformation within the moral and social order.

Symbolic disguising with a similar dramatic purpose was a stock convention of the Moralities ; sometimes there is a change of dress, sometimes only of name. This was not merely a convention of the stage ; it embodied popular beliefs about the methods of the Deceiver—' the devil hath power To assume a pleasing shape.' Thus, in Medwall's *Nature*, Pride and Covetise beguile Man under the names of Worship and Worldly Policy, the other Deadly Sins being disguised in the same way. Moreover, the disguisers, besides their attributes as moral types, are usually given, more specifically than any other figures in the play, the attributes of a particular

[1] *cf.* Bradbrook, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-72, 166-167. The speech in which he describes his motives (at the end of Act I, iv) makes it clear that they belong to the situation, not his character. Similarly, his behaviour in his second disguise would be ridiculous if it were really addressed to Lussurioso ; but it is addressed primarily to the audience, on the assumption that every stage disguise is successful.

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social class. Man, in *Nature*, is a noble, but he is made representative of humanity in general; it is emphasized, on the other hand, that Pride is a knight, and the Deadly Sins only appear as officers of the household. In the later Moralities, social themes, as distinct from theological, become more prominent; and the moral role of the disguisers is often completely merged into their role as the agents of social change.[1] In the Marian play, *Respublica*, for example, the Reformation is engineered by the profiteer Avarice, disguised as Policy; and the characters with aliases in *The Tyde Taryeth No Man* are the broker, Hurtful Help, who operates under the deceptive title of Help, and his accomplices.

The disguisers are contrasted with the other characters in that the latter represent the permanent and unequivocal moral standards which maintain social stability. Even in the middle-class Moralities of the sixteenth century, the disguisers—and the vices in general—

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[1]Occasionally, change of dress has a different significance, as when Everyman puts on the robe of Contrition. There is an interesting variation in *Impatient Poverty*, a late Protestant Morality ('newly imprinted' in 1560—see J. S. Farmer, '*Lost*' *Tudor Plays*). The moral is that 'by peace men grow to great richesse.' Envy masquerades as Charity, and Misrule as Mirth, in the usual way; but in the case of Impatient Poverty himself, change of dress is made to imply a change of station: 'Hold this vesture and put it on thee; From henceforth thou shalt be called Prosperity' (Farmer, p. 320). He then boasts that he is 'a gentlemen bore,' and wastes his substance in riot, reappearing as Poverty in consequence. Finally, he is reconciled to Peace again, and reassumes the vesture of Prosperity. On these disguisings, see W. R. Mackenzie, *The English Moralities from the Point of View of Allegory*, p. 9: in the Moralities which deal with the struggle between Vices and Virtues for the soul of Man, Man 'is regarded as inclining to good rather than to evil; consequently, in nearly every case, the Vices have to resort to subterfuge in order to win his temporary companionship . . . Almost invariably . . . (they) introduce themselves by assumed names as Virtues . . .' (*Cf.* pp. 31, 42, 47, 113, etc.; and the role of Deceit in Middleton's *World Tost at Tennis*). On the middle-class outlook of the later Moralities, see Wright, *loc. cit.*

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frequently stand for ' usury ' in its various forms ;[2] the other characters, for its opponents and victims. Traditional ethics under the Tudors subsume social and economic questions directly under moral categories ; the system rests on the belief that the social order has been established by Nature in accordance with the divine will. This is expounded by Nature herself at the beginning of Medwall's play :

> Th' almighty God that made each creature,
> As well in heaven as other place earthly,
> By His wise ordinance hath purveyed me, Nature,
> To be as minister, under Him immediately,
> For th' enchesoun (*the reason*) that I should, perpetually,
> His creatures in such degree maintain
> As it hath pleased His grace for them to ordain.

This is the ethic of a society predominantly agricultural, in which ' everything . . . seemed to be the gift of nature, the obvious way of life, and thus the result of the Divine ordering, whether as a good gift or as a penalty.'[3] In order to enjoy the divine bounty,

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[2]On the hostility of early puritanism towards ' usury,' and the relation between this and the economic position of the yeomanry and the small traders, see R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (p. 159 and *passim*), and his *Introduction* to Wilson's *Discourse Upon Usury*, especially pp. 24, 30.

[3]E. Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* (trans.), Vol. I, p. 249. *Cf.* L. C. Knights, *op. cit.*, and the works of Dr. Tawney. For the quotation from *Nature*, see Farmer, *' Lost ' Tudor Plays*, p. 43 ; and compare, *e.g.*, Lever's sermons and Sir Thomas Elyot's *Governour*. The ordinances of Nature were to be apprehended and enforced by Reason—see King Edward VI's *Remains*, quoted in the *Introduction* to Wilson, p. 15 ;—but, by the end of the sixteenth century, it was felt that social changes and scientific thought had together altered the standards of Nature for human conduct—in Ralegh's words, ' there (was) a confused controversy about the very essence of nature ' (*The Sceptic, Works*, edn. 1827, Vol. VIII, p. 556 ; *cf. The History of the World*, Book I, *Works*, Vol. II). In an article on the unpublished plays of the Royalist Earl of Westmoreland, A. Harbage quotes a

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to maintain each individual in the sufficiency appropriate to the station in which he was born, it was necessary to observe the conditions on which it was given; and the satisfaction of the profit-motive, of 'greed,' or, equally, the wasteful gratification of selfish pleasure, whether on the part of knight, burgher, or peasant, interfered with this primary necessity. They were 'against nature,' contrary to the obvious expression of the divine will. Opportunities for personal aggrandisement, by means of capital investment, organizing ability, or technical innovation, were, relatively, too few and unimportant, before the sixteenth century, seriously to disturb this traditional order; and it seemed evident that they could only be taken at someone else's expense. By the end of the century, as commercial enterprise, money power, and new industrial techniques began to dominate economic life, they seemed to involve a change in the whole relationship between man and nature, between the individual and his vocation.[4] To conservative minds, it meant the substitution of appearances for realities.

Hence, while the Elizabethans applied the Morality conventions of disguise to a variety of new purposes, the earlier associations were not lost. The tradition of dramatic allegory, with disguising as an essential part, was also maintained by the court masque; and *Cynthia's Revels*, in particular, with its satire on the social climbers and rootless adventurers infesting the court, is avowedly a combination of masque and Morality. 'The night is come,' says one of the Children in the Induction, explaining the plot, 'and Cynthia intends to come forth . . . All the courtiers must provide for revels; they conclude upon a masque, the device of which is . . . that each of these Vices, being to appear before Cynthia, would seem to be other than indeed they are; and therefore assume the most neighbouring Virtues as a masquing habit.' Here Jonson

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significant passage from the synopsis of his *Virtue's Triumph* (1644): 'Lo: Earth puts Reason to be governor or tutor to Nature; but hee growne to manhood, and frustratted by his inseparable companion Custome, together with the help of his ruffianlyke servant Will, to know his owne strength too soone rejects and casts of Reason . . . ' (*Studies in Philology*, Vol. XXXI, p. 33).

[4]See Note A at the end of this essay.

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turns the popular ethic against the courtly, the Morality against the masque ; for it was the convention of the masques that the courtiers who came to dance as virtues or deities were in fact the incarnations of the qualities they assumed ; the masque itself was a social institution, representing the court as the magnificent embodiment of the virtues by right of which it claimed to govern. *The Malcontent*, *Women Beware Women*, and *The Revenger's Tragedy* make ironic use of this function of disguisings in the masque. In Tourneur's case, especially, the masque, as a symbol of courtly riot, is treated from the point of view of the Morality. The courtiers in the masque described by Antonio are Morality Vices—

> Putting on better faces than their own
> Being full of fraud and flattery ;

and, throughout the play, descriptions of revels form the nucleus of the satire, leading up to the fatal masque at the end. They are associated with the references to bastardy and prostitution, and to ' patrimonies washed a-pieces,' and with the images of cosmetics and of justice ' gilt o'er ' with favour. Against the ' forgetful feasts ' is set the image of the skeleton. The corruption of the court by wealth and luxury, and its violation of the moral order which justifies high rank, is set beside the effects of usury, both alike overthrowing the standards of Nature. Virtue and honour, on the other hand, are identified, as in Castiza's first soliloquy, with the norms of the traditional manorial order, which Tourneur makes to stand for social norms in general. Several of his metaphors are taken from the payment of rents—vengeance, for example, is a ' quit-rent.'

Professor Knight's description of the structure of a Shakespearean play, then, is peculiarly appropriate to *The Revenger's Tragedy* also: it is ' an expanded metaphor, by means of which the original vision has been projected into forms roughly correspondent with actuality, conforming thereto . . . according to the demands of its nature.' The central metaphors, and the technique of presentation, are the products of mediæval ways of thought, as they had taken shape on the stage in the conventions of the Moralities. With his narrow and hypersensitive mentality, his imperviousness to the psychological make-up of individuals, and

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his intense preoccupation with ethics, Tourneur could not have written successful drama except by means of their example.[1]

The total impression created by the development of his plot, by the figures of the lecherous old Duke and his court, by the imagery and rhythms of the verse, is that of a hectic excitement, a perverse and over-ripe vitality on the verge of decay ; the themes of the danse macabre, suggested in *Hamlet* and *The Malcontent*, dominate *The Revenger's Tragedy*. But the satire is not hysterical ; Tourneur maintains an alert sardonic irony which makes its objects grotesque as well as disgusting. The sense of proportion expressed in the style is not that of the Revenge plays ; it comes from the Moralities, and from Jonson. Jonson's influence is most apparent in the scene where Vendice tempts his mother and sister ; the subject is from *The Malcontent*, the style from Volpone :[2]

Vendice : Would I be poor, dejected, scorned of greatness,
Swept from the palace, and see others' daughters
Spring with the dew o' the court, having mine own
So much desired and loved by the duke's son?
No, I would raise my state upon her breast ;
And call her eyes my tenants ; I would count

---

[1]See the *Funeral Poem* on Sir Francis Vere, and the *Character of Robert Earl of Salisbury*. The approach in each case is ethical and formal ; Tourneur has none of the psychological insight, or even the curiosity, displayed by his contemporaries. *Laugh and Lie Down*, if it is his, shows another side to his temperament, but no further interest in character. At the same time, he shows a firm enough grasp of those aspects of character relevant to his dramatic purpose in *The Revenger's Tragedy*.

[2]Compare the wooing of Celia in *Volpone* ; and *cf.* L. C. Knights, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-188. *Volpone* was produced in 1606, *The Revenger's Tragedy* published in 1607. For Morality prototypes to these speeches, see *Nature* ('For my love let us some night be there, (*i.e.*, at the stews)/At a banket or a rare supper ;/And get us some wanton meat/So we may have some dainty thing—/Yet I would spend twenty shilling/Wheresoever I it get.' (Farmer, p. 95) ; or the scenes in *All for Money* where Money is supposed to vomit forth Pleasure, and Pleasure, Sin, on the stage.

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My yearly maintenance upon her cheeks ;
Take coach upon her lip ; and all her parts
Should keep men after men, and I would ride
In pleasure upon pleasure . . .

Vendice : How blessed are you! you have happiness alone ;
Others must fall to thousands, you to one,
Sufficient in himself to make your forehead
Dazzle the world with jewels, and petitionary people
Start at your presence . . .

These passages are not mere echoes of Jonsonian phrasing ; they have the energetic hyperbole and the finely measured scorn of Jonson's best manner. The scene continues with a passage of brilliant extravaganza :

Vendice : O, think upon the pleasures of the palace!
Secured ease and state! the stirring meats,
Ready to move out of the dishes, that e'en now
Quicken when they are eaten!
Banquets abroad by torchlight! music! sports!
Bareheaded vassals, that had ne'er the fortune
To keep on their own hats, but let horns wear 'em!
Nine coaches waiting—hurry, hurry, hurry—

Castiza : Ay, to the devil,

Vendice : Ay, to the devil! (*Aside*) To the duke, by my faith.

Gratiana : Ay, to the duke : daughter, you'd scorn to think o' the devil, an you were there once. (II, i).

The excitement of these passages is hardly the product of a nightmare vision. On the contrary, it is controlled and directed by a sense of the crude realities underlying the court's fantastic behaviour. The source and character of Tourneur's grotesquerie is indicated, again, by Spurio's soliloquy :

Faith, if the truth were known, I was begot
After some gluttonous dinner ; some stirring dish
Was my first father, when deep healths went round,
And ladies cheeks were painted red with wine,

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> Their tongues, as short and nimble as their heels,
> Uttering words sweet and thick ; and when they rose,
> Were merrily disposed to fall again. (I, ii).

The nervous and sinister tones of the mockery are balanced by the ' primitive ' realism.

Nevertheless, Tourneur does not escape from his cycle of decay ; there is nothing in the play, in its scheme of moral and social values, to compensate for Vendice's fall. In the process of commercial development, which had brought new hopes and possibilities to the middle classes, Tourneur saw only that the court had been uprooted from the people and the soil, while the old-fashioned gentry were left to their honour, their poverty, and their discontent. As, throughout the sixteenth century, landlord and ploughman alike had been submitted to a growing dependence on money, and their customary incomes had proved inadequate to meet rising costs and a rising standard of living, the stability of the old hierarchy had broken down. Many of the nobility and gentry were forced to give up their ' hospitality ' or to sell their estates ; and their successors and survivors, knowing, with Burghley, that ' gentility is nothing else but ancient riches,' had acted accordingly.[1] The nobility themselves had become enclosers, joint-stock-holders, company-promoters, monopolists ; the court, at the turn of the century, was the happy-hunting-ground for adventurers and profiteers. Until the end of Elizabeth's reign, this commercialization of the nobility was in harmony with the main economic and political needs of the middle classes: but when the latter had outgrown their royal tutelage, the powers of the court became obstructive ; and when titles were sold and honours conferred on irresponsible favourities, it became clear that the system of court privileges opened the way to the machiavellian and the sycophant. The fount of honour was poisoned at the source. While ' the disproportion between honour and means ' became more glaring, large numbers of the lesser gentry, deprived of the security of the old order, found themselves landless men, dependent on an uncertain or an insufficient patronage, men without ' vocations.'[2] Tourneur's Vendice is one of the dramatic spokes-

[1] See Note B at the end of this essay.

[2] L. C. Knights has shown how widespread was unemployment or

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men of these malcontents. His independence belongs to the past ; the present is contaminated by the values of ' gold.' On the basis of this contrast, which is extended to society as a whole, Tourneur's poetry formulates an exceptionally coherent response to the life of his time. But the business of buying and selling, the accumulation of wealth without social responsibility, which has hoisted sensuality to its evil eminence in his court, is accepted as normative and final ; it becomes a process by which the values of Nature and the impulses which go to maintaining a civilized life are inevitably decomposed into their opposites. This conception forms the organizing principle in Vendice's second speech to the skull, where the complex themes and symbols of the whole play are concentrated into a single magnificent passage.

The irony of this speech is reinforced by the dramatic situation : ' all the betrayed women are in a sense represented by the poisoned skull of Vendice's mistress—not only she herself, but Antonio's wife, Castiza, who would have been betrayed, and the imaginary ' country lady ' whom the Duke thought he was about to seduce.'[3]

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misemployment among men of this class about the turn of the century, and how closely this was connected with the literary fashion of melancholy (*op. cit.*, Appendix B). Thomas Wilson's bitter account of the position of the younger brother in a gentle family (*The State of England, Anno Dom. 1600*), and Earle's *Character of a Younger Brother* (in *Microcosmography*) give further confirmatory evidence. Tourneur himself probably came from a gentle family (see Professor Nicoll's *Introduction* to the *Works*, pp. 2-5), and became a protégé of Sir Edward Cecil, Viscount Wimbledon (pp. 29-32). One of the few extant documents concerning him is a letter from his widow to Wimbledon, complaining that her husband had left an assured—though poorly paid—employment with the States of Holland to become Secretary to the Council of War and Secretary to the Marshall's Court in the Cadiz expedition of 1625 ; and that, as he had been ousted from the former, more lucrative Secretaryship, he had left her destitute. Compare the account of Thomas Wilson's career in F. J. Fisher's *Introduction* (*Camden Miscellany*, Vol. XVI).

[3] I have again made use of Miss Bradbrook's analysis (*op. cit.*, pp. 169-172).

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Similarly, 'yon fellow' is the imaginary profligate turned highwayman, the approaching Duke, and the Duchess's youngest son, who has already appeared under judgment for rape, and is ironically despatched in the next scene. Thus the skull becomes the fitting symbol, as it is the final result, of the process represented by the action and the imagery, by which solid realities are exchanged for treacherous appearances. The metaphor of 'exchange' is important; Vendice's irony turns, in this speech, on the ambiguities of the word 'for,' referring both to equivalence in exchange and to purpose or result. In the first lines, a complex group of relationships are associated in the image contrasting the 'labours' of the worm—physically present in 'expend' and 'undo'—with the silken bedizenment of the lady for whom they are undertaken, a contrast which appears, at the same time, as one between the silk and the skeleton it covers; it is for the skull that the labours are ultimately intended. The 'silkworm' is also the worm of the grave; it suggests, too, the poor weaver, 'undone' for the sake of the wealthy—the contrast between rich and poor is made explicit in the next speech;—and the colours of the silk and of the gold which is paid for it are made flat and wan by the suggested comparison with her 'yellow' face. The speech is developed round a further series of exchanges:

> Does the silkworm expend her yellow labours
> For thee? for thee does she undo herself?
> Are lordships sold to maintain ladyships
> For the poor benefit of a bewitching minute?
> Why does yon fellow falsify highways
> And put his life between the judge's lips,
> To refine such a thing, keeps horse and men
> To beat their valours for her?
> Surely we're all mad people, and they
> Whom we think are, are not; we mistake those.
> 'Tis we are mad in sense, they but in clothes. (III, v).

In the third and fourth lines, the process of commercial exchange is again ironically invoked; the social stability implied by 'lordships' and 'maintained' is undermined in the colloquial sarcasm of 'ladyships,' and the 'bewitching minute' of lust is a 'poor benefit' to exchange for an inherited estate—'poor,' too, in the

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sense that procreation is made futile. ' Bewitching ' recalls the earlier scene in which it was suggested that Gratiana's attempt to prostitute her daughter was due to diabolic possession ; it detaches Vendice from the dissolution he contemplates and yet implies that it is inescapable. ' Yon fellow ' implicates the Duke and his stepson as well as the broken gallant, so that ' falsify ' attaches to the royal justice itself together with the royal highway. There is also a suppressed pun on counterfeit coinage, which, with the corrosive impression of ' falsify,' is carried on in the next lines: by his emphasis on the root senses of the verbs (' maintain,' ' falsify,' ' refine '), Tourneur sets up a characteristic tension between the imagined activities and the ideal relationships to which they ought to conform. In the old dispensation—as in Medwall's play—Nature had appointed Reason to govern Sensuality ; here, Reason has been overturned. It takes its revenge, against the irrationality of the ' bewitching minute,' in the contrast between the life and the moment of sentence. The judgment is also the Last Judgment As before, the mounting rhythm then returns, after a pause, to the slow, heavy syllables referring to the skull, the final cause, it is suggested, as it is the final stage, of the whole movement—' to refine such a thing.' The phrase, coming at this point, implies both that the overlay of ' refinement ' on her ' ladyship ' is as futile, and as deathly, as the poisoned cosmetic on the skull, and that this comparison actually clarifies a state of affairs present wherever bones are clothed with flesh. The next phrase again catches in its puns the self-destruction of a powerful stimulus ; ' keeps ' relates it to ' maintains,' four lines above ; ' beat their valours ' refers primarily to the fierce courage of the highwaymen, but ' beats ' also means ' abates,' and ' valors ' are ' values '—once again the purchase of death for life. Thus the perversion of the impulses making for life finds its culminating expression in the image of violent action, and the activity is simultaneously nullified by means of the puns. The last three lines generalize what has already been revealed to the senses. Just as the great lady of the first lines has dissolved into her ' ladyship,' so all seeming realities have been reduced to the skull ; so that to murder the Duke with the poisoned skull is a fully appropriate revenge.

Tourneur's symbols, then, are organized by applying to the contemporary world the standards of the mediæval social tradition,

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as it had survived through the sixteenth century. But *The Revenger's Tragedy*, with its alternation between finely wrought passages of high mental and nervous tension and passages of clumsy sententious generalization, represents an emotional equilibrium which Tourneur evidently could not maintain. He had profited by the example of Jonson, who had remodelled the Morality drama, with its barely delineated types and its sparse, loosely connected incidents, into something solid and closely-knit ; but Jonson's mind was the more elastic, more confident of the permanent validity of his standards, more independent and detached. His dramatic structures allow of a varied interplay of motives and experiences ; Tourneur's do not. In *The Revenger's Tragedy* he succeeded in directing the response to his situation by presenting Morality figures who express, or arouse, acute and powerful, but narrowly restricted emotions. When, instead of dealing with types, he tried to examine individual motives, and to argue out the reasons for his judgments, he failed. By comparison with the earlier play, *The Atheist's Tragedy* is abstract and forced. The best passages, such as the description of Charlemont's supposed death at Ostend, are set speeches, almost independent of their dramatic contexts ; the symbolism is mechanical, the poetic theorising lame and unconvincing. Charlemont, who, unlike Vendice, leaves his revenge to heaven, is an uninteresting paragon; and D'Amville's villainy and Castabella's innocence are so naïvely paraded that Tourneur defeats his purpose —if Castiza's shrill chastity were emphasized in the same way, so that the puppet became a person, she would be nauseating. Charlemont and his father have some of the virtues Tourneur attributed to Vere and Salisbury ; but when he comes to offer his positive values, they are formal and, dramatically, lifeless.

With Jonson and *The Revenger's Tragedy*, the influence of the mediæval tradition virtually came to an end. None of the Stuart dramatists whose main work came later—with the partial exception of Massinger, in his comedies—attempted to revive it ; the trend of dramatic writing was towards semi- or pseudo-naturalism. Webster fumbled with the Revenge conventions in the effort to develop something relatively new to the stage—to excite varied or conflicting sympathies for individuals at odds with their surroundings. His picture of society resembles Tourneur's; but the Morality elements, which had represented for the latter

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the dramatic equivalents for a central core of judgments and feelings, have disappeared ; and Webster, unable to come to rest on any attitude, from which to value his people, more stable or more penetrating than a pose of stoical bravado, could not write coherent drama at all. Where they are not simply melodrama, his plays depend on exploiting immediate sensations, disjointed from their dramatic contexts ; and this applies not only to his stagecraft, but to his verse, which works by analogous means, and which gains, as Tourneur's loses, from quotation in short passages. His plays, with their unrealized ' sense of tragic issues ' in the individual, point towards a dramatic reorientation, a development from Shakespeare, which they do not themselves achieve. After Shakespeare, the only dramatist to achieve such a reorientation was Middleton.

L. G. SALINGAR.

NOTE A. *Cf.* Troeltsch, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 249. The capitalist economic system, he points out, is ' based on money' : it ' depersonalizes values, makes property abstract and individualistic . . . raises men above natural conditions of life . . . replaces the idea of providence and the spirit of mutual help . . . by products which are at all times ready for use . . . It is the cause of the development of formal abstract law, of an abstract, impersonal way of thinking, of rationalism and relativism. *As a result, it leads to a restless and changing social differentiation which is based not upon the unchanging land, but upon accidental accumulations of money which can change anything into anything else* ' ; (my italics). Tudor England was perplexed by the change : ' If we truly examine the difference of both conditions ; to wit, of the rich and mighty, whom we call fortunate ; and of the poor and oppressed, whom we account wretched ; we shall find the happiness of the one, and the miserable estate of the other, so tied by God to the very instant, and both so subject to interchange (witness the sudden downfall of the greatest Princes, and the speedy uprising of the meanest persons) as the one hath nothing so certain whereof to boast ; nor the other so uncertain, whereof to bewail itself.' (Ralegh, *Works*, Vol. II, p. xl ; and *cf.* his *Instructions to His Son*, *Works*, Vol. VIII, pp. 565-566).

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NOTE B. The ideal ruling class, for early Tudor theorists, was a static, if not an exclusive aristocracy, combining the privileges of birth and wealth, and justifying them by means of its services to the state and the community. Sir Thomas Elyot is representative: 'It is of good congruence that they, which be superior in condition or behaviour, should have also pre-eminence in administration, if they be not inferior to other in virtue. Also they *having of their own revenues certain* whereby they have competent substance to live without taking rewards: it is likely that they will not be so desirous of lucre (whereof may be engendred corruption), as they which have very little or nothing so certain . . . Also such men, *having substance in goods by certain and stable* possessions . . . may . . . cause (their children) to be so instructed and furnished towards the administration of a public weal, that a poor man's son . . . never or seldom may attain to the semblable. Toward the which instruction I have prepared this work.' (*The Governour*, 1531, Book I, Chapter III; my italics). By the end of the century, the basis for this ideal harmony between birth, wealth, and public service was crumbling—the oppressive system of monopolies, for example, was in large part due to the efforts of an unpaid noble bureaucracy to recoup themselves at the public expense. A member of the Parliament of 1601 complained that there were two undesirable types among the Justices of the Peace: those who 'from base stock and lineage by (their) wealth (are) gotten to be within the commission,' and 'gentleman born,' who were too poor for their position and were consequently bribable; (E. P. Cheyney, *A History of England from the Defeat of the Armada to the Death of Elizabeth*, Vol. II, pp. 319-320). Another side to the change is revealed by the younger Thomas Wilson, who refers to an inventory of noble fortunes, and notes 'great alterations almost every year, so mutable are worldly things and worldly men's affairs'; (*The State of England, Anno Dom. 1600*, ed. F. J. Fisher, *Camden Miscellany*, Vol. XVI, p. 22). He remarks that the gentry are 'generally inclined to great and vain expense' (p. 38), but records with pleasure that the yeomanry are decayed because 'the gentlemen, which were wont to addict themselves to the wars, are now for the most part grown to become good husbands, and know as well how to improve their lands to the uttermost as the farmer or countryman, so that they take their

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farms into their hands as leases expire . . . ' (p. 18 ; *cf.* F. J. Fisher's *Introduction*). For Burghley's opportunist attitude towards this state of affairs, and Henry Percy's pessimism, see G. B. Harrison's edition of Percy's *Advice to His Son* ; and compare Ralegh's *Instructions to His Son* and Bacon, *Of Expense*. With Burghley's maxim on riches and gentility, compare Ralegh, *Works*, Vol. II, p. xxxii, etc. Neither Bacon nor Ralegh considered the hereditary nobility as a stable social force, providing the natural leadership of society ; see Bacon, *Of Nobility* (' A numerous nobility causeth poverty and inconvenience in a state, for it is a surcharge of expense ; and besides, *it being of necessity that many of the nobility fall in time to be weak in fortune*, it maketh a kind of disproportion between honour and means '—my italics), and Ralegh's *Maxims of State* (*Works*, Vol. VIII). On the changes in the position of the gentry, and on the significance of 'hospitality,' see R. H. Tawney and L. C. Knights, *op. cit.*, and E. P. Cheyney, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 95, 108, Vol. II, p. 13. For a good account of the relation of the gentry to the professions and of the modifications in the theory of gentility, see R. Kelso, *The Doctrine of the English Gentleman in the Sixteenth Century*.

CORRESPONDENCE

Sirs,

Mr. Mason's article in the last number of *Scrutiny* on the Left Book Club raises a great many points, many of which, however just they may be, require considerably more analysis and substantiation before they can convince any but those already convinced. However, space being strictly limited, it is only possible to offer a short comment on one aspect of the article, and to refrain from taking up issues that are not immediately relevant to this aspect.

Mr. Mason undertakes

> ' to discover what effect it [the Left Book Club] has upon the maintenance of standards in the reading public.'

and he comes to the conclusion that

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' It is clear then (always pending the arrival of a crisis) that what the L.B.C. stands most in need of is a stricter maintenance of the standards they profess.'

But earlier Mr. Mason writes of the underlying theory of the L.B.C. that

' . . . it is a theory (whether sound or not is not here relevant) that in a surprisingly short time we shall be faced with a grave crisis . . . '

The juxtaposition of these three quotations seems to demonstrate a serious evasion on Mr. Mason's part of the issues he himself raises. He offers certain criticisms of the L.B.C., but qualifies them by admitting that they only have force ' pending the arrival of a crisis.' But since he admits that Mr. Gollancz's whole undertaking is based upon the theory that ' in a surprisingly short time we shall be faced with a grave crisis,' it is difficult to see how he can assert that ' whether [such a theory is] sound or not is not here relevant.' On Mr. Mason's own admission, the burden of his article rests upon the assumption that such a crisis has not yet arrived, and hence that Mr. Gollancz's concern is premature.

Were this the case, one could perhaps do little but quibble with Mr. Mason on issues of minor importance, and one might even be willing to agree that ' the instructions that have been and will have to be passed down cannot claim the name of education.' But, much as one would no doubt like to share such optimism for the near future, not even the most determined misreading of the news can permit it. If the present world-situation is not to be termed a crisis, then even Mr. Wells would find himself ill-equipped for describing the real article. Abroad the Spanish war is in its twentieth month, and still seems nowhere near ended ; in France and Czecho-Slovakia Fascist agents have been arrested *en masse* and detailed plans discovered for the conducting of anti-democratic activity and armed revolt ; Italy has joined the anti-Comintern Pact ; Rumania has experienced a Fascist *coup d'état* ; and, in the Far East, Japan's invasion of China is now involving direct attacks upon the interests of the Imperialistic Powers, and M. Litvinov's contention that ' Peace is indivisible ' gains added support in fact. In England, for all Mr. Mason's statement that ' our liberties, such as they are,

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compare favourably with those enjoyed ' in Russia—has he, one is prompted to ask, read the Webbs' remarkable work?—for all that, it is hard to be cheerful. The cost of living is still rising, unemployment is increasing steadily ; the National Government, having sabotaged the League, behaves accordingly in its home policy, and introduces industrial conscription to ensure the fulfilment of its gigantic arms programme. So familiar have we become with the facts that we tend to lose sight of that fundamental crisis of whose extreme urgency they are the expression ; a crisis whose arrival one need hardly be expected to await.

In conclusion, one can only regret that Mr. Mason has not supported some of his statements with that documentation for which one might have wished. For example, he states that 'Another group of books expound directly some political point of view . . . A number of books bear on the question of a " popular front." It is among these books, naturally, that the worst excesses occur.' But he does not allow us any examples which might give particularity to such a generalization. And, again, ' on the " United Front " issue ' Mr. Mason can ' detect signs of disingenuous quibbling and downright intolerance ' ; since, however, he offers no evidence for making such an accusation, it is hard to make any convincing refutation. At any rate, such unsupported generalities, whatever their correctness, are surely foreign to the pages of *Scrutiny*. But they are not so depressing as the ' crisis ' issue. With Mr. Mason, one is forced to note certain disturbing features about the L.B.C.—though this is by no means to endorse his criticisms as a whole. But to end one's investigation where he does is to refuse to consider the Club on the only grounds which make its existence a necessity. Mr. Gollancz has set up an organization which seeks to enrol, as soon as possible, the maximum *active* opposition to Fascism and war. He does so on the assumption that a crisis is imminent, if not already present. And, if at the same time, he finds himself maintaining less rigorously than he would like his own professed standards, that is a blemish which, in the present critical situation, cannot be avoided. The cultural aspect of the L.B.C. cannot—as Mr. Mason's parenthesis admits—be considered *in vacuo*.

BORIS FORD.

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MR. MASON replies:

The answer to Mr. Ford's main objection seems to me to be found explicitly in the conclusion of my article and implicitly in the situation itself. My reply can only take the form of a simple *mise au point*. For whether one envisages the ' crisis ' in political or cultural terms, everyone who has the interests of education at heart is forced into a dilemma: on the one hand he is aware of the desperately short time remaining in which any education is possible, and, on the other hand, he knows that there are no short cuts to the kind of education which really means anything. Therefore, if he is not to despair altogether, he must adopt a sort of desperate optimism. He must act *as if* it were possible to lay the foundations of an education while at the same time he notes the approach of a general collapse. Now to judge from their published professions the sponsors of the L.B.C. are fully aware of the dilemma and have attempted to meet the difficulties of both its horns. But clearly if one assumes as certain the immediate prospect of war, the question of education as understood by Messrs. Gollancz, Laski and Strachey in their more enlightened moments, disappears. It is true that the L.B.C. does aim at obtaining the ' maximum active opposition to Fascism,' but they do not always pretend that this is a genuine political education. I hope that, in the light of this necessarily over-simplified statement, on a reperusal of the article the degree of relevance of the ' crisis ' question will seem to have been satisfactorily placed.

In reply to the minor points I am obliged to report that my conclusions about the relative degree of liberty in Russia and in England were drawn after the study of (among other documents) the Webbs' book. But that he should imagine their book to be decisive for the question surprises me. A detailed examination of the L.B.C. books did not (for reasons stated in the article) form part of my plan. I am aware that my remarks on them have merely an indicative and provocative character. A specific instance of disingenuousness is to be found in the editorials in which Mr. Gollancz discusses the relation of the Club to the Popular Front and the Communist Party: and intolerance is shown towards the anti-Communist Left (if this is the right expression).

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COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

EDUCATION BY BOOK CLUB.

We print Mr. Ford's letter (see p. 424) because it is an opportunity to reassert the considered point-of-view held by *Scrutiny* and represented by Mr. Mason's article. All the other correspondents and commentators have either corroborated Mr. Mason's restrained criticisms with particular instances and experiences, or commented adversely on his restraint, or done both. The restraint was deliberate ; it was not his intention, or ours, to make a formal ' scrutiny ' of the Left Book Club. The limited scope of the article was explicit. Mr. Ford's letter seems to us to be based on assumptions, and very widely shared assumptions, that conflict with Mr. Mason's and ours. We believe that, though crises may very well make it impossible to go on contending on behalf of critical standards and critical intelligence, there is no more urgent duty than to go on contending, in the most effective ways, that present themselves, while it does remain possible. To put it briefly, if *Scrutiny* could make it more difficult for intelligent persons to invoke the Webbs on Russia as Mr. Ford does, we should feel that a useful function had been performed. As for the Left Book Club, if it is doing valuable work, that work, we believe, will be helped and not hindered by such reminders of what serious standards are as Mr. Mason provided.

' SCRUTINY'S ' SEVENTH YEAR.

With this number *Scrutiny* completes its sixth year. We could make our own criticisms of the various ways in which it has fallen short of its aims and standards, but are nevertheless glad to be able to record that we have continued to receive gratifying support and encouragement. If half the regular buyers of *Scrutiny* were to subscribe we should be in a still stronger position.

It is by way of emphasizing this point that we are subtracting the postage-charge from the subscription rate:

Scrutiny is now ten shillings a year, post free.

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THE ILLUSION OF COGENCY

ILLUSION AND REALITY, by Christopher Caudwell (Macmillan, 18/-).

Illusion and Reality may fairly be said to belong to the class (several examples of which have been reviewed in these pages) of ' Marxist interpretation of literature.' It is no doubt a title which a strict Marxist would reject as a libel on his studies. Nevertheless this book and several others have been approved in Communist and near-Communist circles. At any rate a characteristic of these books is an assumption of the novelty of their approach. Armed with the Marxian phraseology and technique they assault the problem of the relation of literature to society, but however revolutionary their interpretation of society, there is a surprising staleness and tameness in their approach to literature. They are essentially amateur works and consequently the proportion of unrelated generalization is high. The dialectic invariably proves a procrustean bed for the literature under consideration. (Though a more complex image is needed to do justice to the variety of manipulations to which literature is subjected in the attempt to fit it into the correct categories). As a class these books have no intrinsic interest. Nor do they enrich the body of Marxist thought. But because they are on the whole favourably received by the public they provide the occasion for a critical examination. To employ an expression much favoured by their authors, they 'reflect' the increasing tendency to undervalue the function of literature in society, while illustrating increasingly fashionable attitudes in the reading public. In so far as they persuade people of the desirability of the Communist state, they do so under terms which jeopardize the future of civilization.

Yet the responsibility for the failure of these books cannot be laid upon the ' dialectic ' itself. Whatever be the precise formulation one draws from the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin, it seems theoretically capable of all that it claims. Though perhaps it is just this theoretic perfection which paralyzes our authors. It is so easy to remain at the stage of the brilliant generalization, the all-comprehending possibility and to assert rather than to show that the work of relating has been done. For to attempt this

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Herculean task would require abilities not normally found united in one man. Merely to correlate in a satisfactory manner the various specializations in one broad field of science seems impossible to-day. Yet the metaphysical sweep of the dialectic merely beats the air if it neglects the strict discipline of the sciences it attempts to embrace. It is through this neglect that the rigour of the dialectic comes to seem illusory. And as has been insisted often enough it is only through the strict practice of literary criticism that the data are available for those who would establish the relation of literature to society.

Illusion and Reality is tedious and unconvincing because it assumes as established all that we should like to see proved. The author boldly announces historical materialism to be the basis of his study. And it is true that we are treated throughout to statement and restatement of 'those hastily scribbled eleven *Theses on Feuerbach* that marked the beginning of a new era in human thought.' All other views of the subject-object relation are treated with contempt—a contempt that we are prevented from sharing until the Marxian conception is *shown* to be superior. It is true that this would require a purely philosophical treatise. The author nowhere refers to such a treatise nor does he himself supply the arguments which would render these theses acceptable. For one who finds them baffling their application (in words, at least) to art creates only mystification. The author's view of art disclosed in the preface remains as obscure as ever when the whole book has been read. 'It is an active view, implying an active living relation to art and not a cold contemplation of it, and implying therefore a view of art as active with an explosive, energetic content.' The author seems to be familiar with those early writings of Marx which are full of antitheses and generalizations. Indeed he himself at times writes like a translation of the early Marx and the book is full of quotations acknowledged and unacknowledged. But as they are used they have no more value than they had in their original contexts.

So much for the philosophical aspect of the book. It is equally unsatisfactory on the sociological side. The author, it is evident, has read diligently those anthropological books which form the general reading of our intelligentsia. He gleans here and there to support his generalizations. Where it is convenient Jung, for

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example, or Ogden and Richards are adduced to *prove* something. But all those questions which sociologists are now debating and which when answered form the necessary preliminary to the use of the data collected by the various field workers are here ignored. The author proceeds as if sociology were a science which had already made the advances it will no doubt take at the very least half a century to make.

But setting aside this objection and proceeding as if the sociological positions were established, we are faced with another unsatisfactory feature. It is that the author asserts without demonstrating that poetry is ' simply a parallel in the sphere of ideology to what will take place in the sphere of material economy.' (Even this seems to distort the true Marxist view). The difficulties of such a view are simply not recognized by the author. He does not seem to have asked himself the questions raised, for instance, by L. C. Knights in *Shakespeare and Profit Inflations*. Consequently he finds himself obliged to maintain impossibilities. The most striking of these is that the technical progress of nineteenth-century economic and productive relations is paralleled by an equivalent advance in poetic technique. ' At each stage the bourgeois contradiction by unfolding itself revolutionizes its own base and secures a fresh development of technical resources. Hence the movement from " art for art's sake " to *surréalisme* secures a development of the technique of poetry, of which in England Eliot is the best example . . . ' No one capable of literary criticism would dare assert that the period from Arnold to Eliot is one of steady technical progress and that Eliot develops what can be found in Tennyson. Or at any rate a most carefully documented survey would be necessary so to revolutionize current literary opinion.

Indeed wherever in *Illusion and Reality* the author abandons poetry in the abstract or in the tribal community and approaches individual poets, the illusory nature of the supposed demonstration of historical materialism in this sphere becomes unmistakably evident. At times the ' economic interpretation ' seems actually to be substituted for literary criticism. For instance: ' Shakespeare could not have achieved the stature he did if he had not exposed, at the dawn of bourgeois development, the whole movement of the capitalist contradiction, from its tremendous achievement to its mean decline.' At other times the interpretation offered shows either

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insensitiveness to poetry or an undue subordination of poetry to the exigencies of economic argument. Thus Pope is the perfect expression of the voice of manufacture ; Keats is an escapist ; poetry is not allowed to be pessimist until the nineteenth century: ' in Wordsworth the revolt takes the form of a return to the natural man, *just as it does in Shelley* ' (my italics).

But the most damaging and least excusable defect is the total unawareness of any other kind of breakdown than the economic. Thus for example, he is able to maintain that the development of modern industry has extended the development of individuality. He fails to realize that whether or not the terms ' bourgeois ' or ' proletarian ' have a precise meaning in economics, they must be givn a different meaning when used to describe society in cultural terms. Thus he attempts to justify the word ' proletarian ' to describe the modern thriller, cheap film, jazz music, etc., by a tag from Marx (' it is at once an expression of real misery and a protest against that real misery.'). But it is surely evident that the enjoyment of this ' art ' is perhaps even more general among well-to-do people than among the very poor. Thanks to this blindness to some of the essential (for his thesis) considerations he is able both to find conditions in the U.S.S.R. already favourable to literature and to predict a glorious future for the poet in the coming Communist State.

It would be difficult to do justice to the unreadability of this book and to the irrelevance of most of the subject matter. The author, however, both in the conduct of his ' analysis ' and in his conclusion maintains: ' an analysis of the kind we have just completed, an economic and political analysis of the movement of society to-day, would be ordinarily regarded as foreign to a study of poetry. But no one who has patiently followed the argument thus far can fail to see its relevance to contemporary art, and the importance of understanding the revolutionary transformation of the basis of society which is everywhere affecting art and the artist.' But with all the patience that is needed to get through these 336 large and closely printed pages a more fitting description seems to be (*mutato nomine*) that which the author applies to those contemporary bourgeois artists who go so far as to join the Communist Party. ' His proletarian living bursts into his art in the form of crude and grotesque scraps of Marxist phraseology and

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the mechanical application of the living proletarian theory.' (That this should be so is quite in keeping with the author's theories). For all the apparatus, including a bibliography of some four hundred entries drawn from the widest fields, for me at least, the book does not get anywhere. It would be perhaps facetious to murmur *Wahn, wahn, überall Wahn*. Yet this large volume might be reduced to pamphlet form without suffering in cogency, or even to the original *aperçus* of Marx from which it attempts to develop.

H. A. MASON.

THE END AND THE MEANS

ON THE POETRY OF POPE, by Geoffrey Tillotson (Oxford, 7/6).

Mr. Tillotson greatly admires Pope's poetry and he here attempts to supply a method of approach to it and a tentative appreciation of its value. He is painstaking and unpretentious but, in spite of himself, he comes to Pope with disabling preconceptions about the nature of ' Poetry ' and his methods of analysis are too crude to permit of his rectifying the consequent misunderstandings. He realizes that Pope's claims to greatness rest on the *Dunciad* and the *Moral Essays* and *Epistles*, but he seems to me to admire them for the wrong, or for unimportant, reasons. His many penetrating comments are lost in the surrounding confusion.

As he says, ' the problem for the critic of Pope's poetry is that of relating the mechanics of the verse to its quality for the emotions.' Yet he can write of the *Dunciad*: ' And in this poem and the rest, there was the verse. Pope's verse is, of course, almost faultless.' These sentences indicate the fatally academic nature of his exegesis, which renders futile almost all of his sections on Design, Language, Versification, and the Stratification and Variety in Pope's poetry. He describes adequately the sureness of Pope's transitions from one idea to another in all his work, but when he writes,

> ' Book IV (of the *Dunciad*) may not be defensible as far as form goes. But its quality as satiric creation of human figures is so brilliant that cool-headed criticism looks pedantic . . . ',

it is exasperating that he does not add that form goes nowhere. He is most irritatingly perverse on the use of language. He discusses

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mainly how eighteenth-century poetic diction grew up in the ' progressive poets ' of the seventeenth, Sylvester, Drayton, William Browne, Sandys, Benlowes, Milton and Dryden! No doubt it did, though this is an incomplete list, but to say that all these poets ' stand in the direct line of development ' of either poetry or poetic diction is nonsense. Except in Homer Pope did not use poetic diction in his important verse, but a language drawn, with varying degrees of formalization from the cultivated conversation of his day. It is this language, which, in his all too brief paragraph on it, Mr. Tillotson says that Pope uses ' almost with the freedom and fearlessness of Shakespeare.' On versification, in spite of saying that ' Pope's greatest triumph in the couplet lies in his making it dramatic,' a remark which should, however, be qualified, he spends pages listing effects of balance, etc., without reference to their use in the context.

Mr. Tillotson is no exception to the *Scrutiny* commonplace that academic ideas of technique go along with a preference for the Romantic in poetry. He calls Pope ' a great critical intelligence, the subtlest discriminator of intention and conduct in the whole gamut of our literature,' which is fine and appropriate praise. It is much less appropriate to follow Miss Sitwell by saying that ' Pope's melancholy is perhaps the deepest of all the many layers in the satires,' while it is vague and pointlessly rhapsodic to say that ' he was like his favourite Virgil in whom the tears of things ache and burn behind the solid epic. And it is this quality that constitutes his profound kinship with Mozart and Keats.' Mr. Tillotson should have kept his emphasis on Augustan civilization and Pope's sense of its values. Also he should have kept his emphasis on the figures in the satires as types of folly and wickedness, whose life is on the printed page, and avoided Pope's relation to their actual models, which is biography not criticism. Instead of discussing Pope's sensitiveness to scenery, he could have illustrated Pope's vision of the whole Augustan rural scene by referring to the ending of *Moral Essay IV*. It seems to me that a more disinterested reading of his poetry and a closer study of his use of words and verse rhythms would have enabled Mr. Tillotson to see more clearly the reasons why Pope's satires are great poetry.

GEOFFREY WALTON.

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LIVES AND WORKS OF RICHARD JEFFERIES

JEFFERIES' ENGLAND—Nature Essays by Richard Jefferies, Edited with an Introduction by S. J. Looker (Constable, 8/6).

RICHARD JEFFERIES, Selections of his Work, with details of his Life and Circumstance, his Death and Immortality, by Henry Williamson (Faber and Faber, 7/6).

HODGE AND HIS MASTERS, by Richard Jefferies, revised by Henry Williamson (Methuen, 7/6).

Mention Richard Jefferies to anyone under thirty-five and he or she will almost certainly say ' Do you mean *The Story of My Heart* man? I never read it ' ; and they may recollect having read *Bevis* when young. An uninviting title and a boys' classic seem to be all that remains for the majority of a once considerable reputation. It is excellent therefore that selections from his works should be issued now to bring him before a new public, calling attention to the variety of his genius, with critical essays by the editors enouncing its nature. Unfortunately these selections have been undertaken by the wrong people or in the wrong spirit. It is not true, as some of the reviewers alleged, that they have chosen almost identical extracts—only two pieces are in fact duplicated—but neither book is likely to do Jefferies much good in the way of inducing the intelligentsia to give his entire *œuvre* a trial. Mr. Williamson's selection is much the more attractive and more just in its representative variety, but unhappily so strongly does the editor's personality interleave the pages and so possessive is his attitude to his victim (' My Jefferies ' he calls him, and apostrophises and converses with him with complacent impertinence)[1] that many readers who will decide or have long ago decided that they can't stomach the author of *The Village Book* will not realize that Jefferies is quite another kind of writer on rural themes. It would be a pity if Jefferies should become the property of Mr. Williamson, as Cobbett became the property of G. K. Chesterton.

Jefferies was one of those comprehensive geniuses from whose work you can take what you are inclined to find. Mr. Looker selects to sell us a noble Victorian Jefferies (the mystic, the nature-philosopher, etc.) and not unintentionally: ' It is the purpose of

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this book to show the real Jefferies . . . It celebrates the author of *The Story of My Heart* . . . [where] Knowledge has given place to Wisdom.' This is scarcely an aspect that will appeal to the contemporary public, and reviewers indeed found Mr. Looker's Jefferies dull. From the other selection, which while keeping the same principle (of chronological representation) might have been made far more intelligently, you would conclude that Jefferies had written a much larger proportion of weak, ephemeral or eccentric stuff than is the case, and you are deprived of most of his strongest, finest and characteristic things.[2]

Disinterested campaigning for Jefferies would rather ask Messrs. Hutchinson to reprint Edward Thomas's *Richard Jefferies, His Life and Work* (1908) (preferably in the cheap pocket edition) ; since second-hand booksellers ask a guinea for this Life there must be a long-felt want. This book should be recognized as a classic in critical biography, to stand with Lockhart's Scott and Mrs. Gaskell's Brontë in point of intrinsic interest and containing better literary criticism than many critical works. The well-known fact that Thomas did hack-work for publishers has probably prevented recognition of this book, which he did voluntarily and evidently took much trouble to perfect. Since subsequent writers on Jefferies take all their facts from him as well as his careful bibliography, generally without acknowledgment, and since there is nothing more to be found out about Jefferies (the old inhabitants who knew him having passed away and Thomas anyhow observing ' Of the man himself we know, and apparently can know, very little '), to reprint Thomas's work would automatically render further book-making unnecessary. His is a model biography. The author is

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[1]Someone ought to register a protest against this kind of vulgarity, from which no dead writer seems to be safe. Posterity will think the twentieth-century *literati* had no spiritual manners. Jefferies has beeen one of the worst sufferers—*cf.* Guy N. Pocock's introduction to the Everyman *Bevis* and the last life, an indefensible piece of book-making by Reginald Arkell, *Richard Jefferies* (Rich and Cowan, 1933).

[2]Though not all—there are two good long selections from *Amaryllis at the Fair* which ought to send people to the novel.

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recognized as being present only by the sympathy that informs the narrative and the intelligence that directs the criticism and determines the selections. The selections from Jefferies' works there are so abundant and well-chosen that Thomas's Life of itself will send the reader to their sources. Another good piece of Jefferies criticism is an introduction to one of the novels, *Amaryllis at the Fair*, by Edward Garnett, prefixed to the New Readers Library edition.[1] Garnett exposes the silliness of the Saintsbury kind of critique of Jefferies and declares, with a supporting argument that is at least as necessary now as it was then, that ' in his judgment *Amaryllis* is one of the very few later-day novels of English country life that are worth putting on one's shelf, and that to make room for it he would turn out certain highly-praised novels by Hardy which the critics and the public, with touching unanimity, have voted to be of high rank.'

In fact Jefferies was a many-sided and comprehensive genius, not merely a peculiarly English genius but one whose interests, ideas, and temperament associate him with other peculiarly English geniuses: he recalls or embodies now Cobbett, now D. H. Lawrence, now Dickens, now Edward Thomas himself and he had a sensuous nature akin to but more robust than Keats' ; he has too a strikingly contemporary aspect as social satirist, and he is in the central and most important tradition of English prose style. No selection can do him justice that does not present and even stress these aspects of a writer who has been too generally represented merely as a word-painter of natural beauties, a sort of early Keats in prose.

Perhaps a few quotations from a mass of similar material will illustrate his characteristic vein of vigorous feeling.

> ' Up in the north they say there is a district where the labourers spend their idle hours in cutting out and sticking together fiddles. I do not care twopence for a fiddle as a fiddle ; but still I think if a labouring man coming home from plough, and exposure to rough wind, and living on coarse fare, can still have spirit enough left to sit down and patiently carve out bits of maple wood and fit them together into a complete and tunable

[1]Now O. P. Garnett's introduction is still accessible in Vol. 4 of *Modern English Essays* (Dent).

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fiddle, then he must have within him some of the true idea of art, and that fiddle is in itself a work of art.' [*The Dewy Morn*].

'He minded when that sharp old Miss —— was always coming round with tracts and blankets, like taking some straw to a lot of pigs, and lecturing his missis about economy. What a fuss she made, and scolded his wife as if she was a thief for having her fifteenth boy! His missis turned on her at last and said: "Lor' miss, that's all the pleasure me an' my old man got."' [*Toilers of the Field*].

'In this book some notes have been made of the former state of things before it passes away entirely. But I would not have it therefore thought that I wish it to continue or return. My sympathies and hopes are with the light of the future, only I should like it to come from nature. The clock should be read by the sunshine, not the sun timed by the clock. The latter is indeed impossible, for though all the clocks in the world should declare the hour of dawn to be midnight, the sun will presently rise just the same.' [*Round About a Great Estate*].

'As himself of noble birth, Felix had hitherto seen things only from the point of view of his own class. Now he associated with grooms, he began to see society from their point of view, and recognized how feebly it was held together by brute force, intrigue, cord and axe, and woman's flattery. But a push seemed needed to overthrow it.' [*After London*].

'To me it seems the most curious thing possible that well-to-do people should expect the poor to be delighted with their condition. I hope they never will be.' [*Field and Hedgerow*].

'There were parsons then, as now, in every rural parish preaching and teaching something they called the Gospel. Why did they not rise as one man and denounce this ghastly iniquity [hanging for sheep-steeling], and demand its abolition? They did nothing of the sort; they enjoyed their pipes and grog very comfortably . . . The gallows at the cross-roads is gone, but the workhouse stands . . . that blot on our civilization, the workhouse.' [*Field and Hedgerow*].

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'Then to unlearn the first ideas of history, of science, of social institutions, to unlearn one's own life and purpose; to unlearn the old mode of thought and way of arriving at things; to take off peel after peel, and so get by degrees slowly towards the truth—thus writing, as it were, a sort of floating book in the mind, almost remaking the soul. It seems as if the chief value of books is to give us something to unlearn. Sometimes I feel indignant at the false views that were instilled into me in early days, and then again I see that that very indignation gives me a moral life.' [*Field and Hedgerow*].

And even from *Bevis*, which its editors tell you is an idealization of his boyhood:

'Loo said they were all hungry, but Samson was most hungry. He cried almost all day and all night, and woke himself up crying in the morning. Very often she left him, and went a long way down the hedge because she did not like to hear him.

"But," objected Bevis, "my Governor pays your father money, and I'm sure my mamma sends you things' . . . Bevis became much agitated, he said he would tell the Governor, he would tell dear mamma, Samson should not cry any more. Now Bevis had always been in contact almost with these folk, but yet he had never seen; you and I live in the midst of things, but never look beneath the surface. His face became quite white; he was thoroughly upset. It was his first glance at the hard roadside of life. He said he would do all sorts of things; Loo listened pleased but dimly doubtful, she could not have explained herself, but she nevertheless knew that it was beyond Bevis's power to alter these circumstances.'

In his own time interest was drawn off at his death in disputations about 'Did Richard Jefferies die a Christian?'[1] and when such questions ceased to burn Jefferies was practically relegated with them to limbo. There has always been a garden-suburb cult of *The Story of my Heart* which has assisted in discrediting him. It is an unfortunate title, and the book itself unless read in

[1]See Thomas's Life and Bibliography.

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its place with the whole body of his writings will do him no good. Jefferies was not a ' thinker ' whose thinking is of any use to us without the recreation of the experience that occasioned it, and his ' message ' is more successfully conveyed in such relations, not in the prose poem which he attempted. The other factor that pushed Jefferies out of sight for the post-war generation was the Bloomsbury cult of W. H. Hudson. The impression that left was that Hudson did everything Jefferies did, only much better because he was an artist, a great stylist, and the other a clumsy amateur who wrote journalism. It is hard now to understand how anyone could have had patience with the precious style Hudson affected or have been interested in his Victorian Utopias. We did not venture to disagree openly with Mrs. Woolf and Mr. Herbert Read and Mr. Murry and the *Athenæum*, but we privately found Hudson a bore and, in his sentimentalisation of human life, embarrassing. No one had the strength of mind of the child in The Emperor's New Clothes, and by the time Hudson had ceased to be read Jefferies had dropped back out of sight. It took the red blood of Mr. A. G. Street and the happy ingenuousness of Mr. Adrian Bell to get country life back into the circulating library. It is generally difficult to persuade people to persevere with *A Shepherd's Life*, the best of Hudson's country books, so discouraging are the first two chapters, yet it is well worth reading: but how strained, how literary, how unconvincing compared with the mounting life that informs *Round About a Great Estate*, to take only one out of a pile of Jefferies' good things. And how Hudson dates! while his predecessor is still a modern.

To secure Jefferies his right to be read, several points could be made. One is the intrinsic value as literature of the rural life of much of his work. The large public that enjoyed *Farmer's Glory* and *Corduroy* would equally enjoy in the existing cheap editions *The Amateur Poacher*, *Wild Life in a Southern County* and *Round About a Great Estate* (one of the most delightful books in the English language). Those who have found *Change in the Village* and *Change in the Farm* relevant to their interest in social history will be glad that *Hodge and His Masters* is again in print (a handsome edition, but a cheaper one would have reached a larger public) and will be impelled by that to search Jefferies for more documentation ; since three of the least useful chapters have been chosen for the Faber anthology the reprint will be even more

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welcome. It is characteristic of Jefferies that he expressed regret that Gilbert White ' did not leave a natural history of the people of his day.' The element in Jefferies' writings represented by the interest that Gilbert White lacked is the decisive one ; some of his best work can be described as such a natural history—for instance ' The Country Sunday ' among other essays in *Field and Hedgerow*, and pieces throughout his other volumes of collected essays, *Nature Near London*, *The Life of the Fields*, *The Toilers of the Field*. But it also led him to collect folk-lore, rustic idiom and dialect words, and to note dying crafts and changing ways of living at a time when these subjects were little considered. To a far larger section of the intelligentsia an impressive case could be made for bringing Jefferies to their notice as an approved social thinker. His case-history would make useful propaganda ; one of those Left journalists who turn out biographies showing that writers like Dickens were really just the same kind of writer as Mr. Alec Brown ought to be instructed to do Jefferies. Starting as a member of the yeoman-farmer class with all its Conservative prejudices and habits of social conformism he emancipated himself by nothing but the force of daily experience and sensitive reflection to a position of daring freedom from the ideas of his class, his age and his country (he died in 1887).

It would be noted in such a Life that he planned to write (and may even have written but never published) works called ' The New Pilgrim's Progress ; or, A Christian's Painful Progress from the Town of Middle Class to the Golden City ' and ' The Proletariate : The Power of the Future ' ; that he hated the Church as an oppressor, calling it ' a huge octopus ' and noting with pleasure that ' the pickaxe is already laid to the foundations of the Church tower ' ; that he wrote of ' laws made by the rich for the rich '—' Most certainly the laws ought to be altered and must be altered ' ; that he protested in reference to projects for the cultural elevation of the villagers ' For the enjoyment of art it is first of all necessary to have a full belly ' ; that he never had the smallest hankering after the Merrie Englande past[1] but wanted the latest

[1] ' Dearly as I love the open air, I cannot regret the mediæval days. I do not wish them back again, I would sooner fight in the foremost ranks of Time.'—' Outside London.'

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mechanism for agriculture and ' the light railway to call at the farmyard gate ' and protested that the village had church and chapel but no cottage hospital, library, or lecture system to put the country folk in touch with the mental life of the time—villages should own themselves and have the right by Act of Parliament, like the railways, to buy land back from the land-owners at a reasonable price—' in the course of time, as the people take possession of the earth on which they stand . . . ' he writes ; that he never idyllicised country life or rested for long content with the sensuous beauties of nature—' I am simply describing the realities of rural life behind the scenes ' he says in ' One of the New Voters' and it might often serve as his epigraph ; that he was acutely conscious of the class war and the monetary basis of modern society—*After London ; or, Wild England,* which is always written of as though it were of the *News from Nowhere* or *A Crystal Age* type of pretty day-dream impresses as contemporary not with Morris or Hudson but with *The Wild Goose Chase* (it seems to me to be a consistent satire on the system Jefferies found himself living under and to be in great part autobiographical).[1] Jefferies hated the class distinctions which exacted servility from tenants and farm-hands, kept a hold over the morals of the cottager and strangled his independence, and the fierce attacks on this aspect of rural life should make *The Dewy Morn,*[2] his most considerable novel, a Left Book. I have quoted a significant passage from *Bevis,* and even *Wood Magic,* a story-book for little children, has every claim to be admitted to the socialist nursery. Edward Thomas notes that though Jefferies was aloof and ' not a talker,' yet he ' talked with ease and vigour on his own subjects, most eagerly on the Labour Question.'[3] These notes, which might be

[1]No selection from it is given in either anthology but it is fortunately still in print in the New Readers Library and should make a popular class-room text.

[2]O.P. Nothing from it is given by either editor. Jefferies requested the publisher not to give the MS. to a Tory reader, who would be certain to reject it. Jefferies refused help from the Royal Literary Fund, which might have prolonged his life, because ' he believed that the fund was maintained by dukes and marquises instead of authors and journalists.'

[3]Here is an interesting passage from the posthumous ' Thoughts on

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multiplied if space allowed, could feed a new biography which would make Jefferies appear alive and congenial to our younger generation as neither Mr. Looker's lofty thinker nor Mr. Williamson's alter ego can be. And it would have the merit of being nearer to the truth—the truth of Jefferies' character, that core of his varied writings that unites them and gives them significance. But of course as an account of his work and its importance for posterity it would be ludicrously inadequate, for these facts and quotations only impress when given prominence by extraction and accumulation. Jefferies' ' message ' is so much more complex and deep-rooted that the total impression made by anything he wrote is not of this simple order. For instance, his instinctive humanity and indignant expression of it are controlled by a characteristic irony—that irony of Jefferies' which is so disconcerting that Mr. Looker preferred to ignore it. Nor has *After London* any trace of the crude propaganding and spiritual vulgarity of *The Wild Goose Chase* with which I have suggested a comparison.

For Jefferies was an artist, though not of the Hudson genre. His writing never reaches after effect and seems unconscious of achieving any ; he is therefore the best possible model and for this reason alone should be in common possession, as Addison once was. He might indeed, if a judicious selection were made, supersede *The Coverley Papers* (which have got to be a bore in schools) not to speak of those positively vicious models of Style and The Essay children's taste is officially formed on. Thomas's account of his prose cannot be improved: ' These words call no attention to themselves. There is not an uncommon word, nor a word in an uncommon sense, all through Jefferies' books. There are styles which are noticeable for their very lucidity and naturalness ; Jefferies is not noticeable even to this extent . . . His style was not a garment in which he clothed everything indiscriminately . . . He did not make great phrases, and hardly a single sentence would prove him a master . . . Though he had read much, it was without having played the sedulous ape that he found himself in the great

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the Labour Question ': ' Then, for Heaven's sake, let us all have a fair chance: do not make its possession dependent upon morality, virtue, genius, personal stature, nobility of mind, self-sacrifice, or such rubbish.'

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tradition.' He did not make great phrases. Anyone in Bloomsbury can make a phrase, but Jefferies' effects are cumulative. They express a play of character and an original outlook, so that in their context the simplest groups of words are pregnant, as when he writes in 'Bevis's Zodiac': 'The sparkle of Orion's stars brought to him a remnant of the immense vigour of the young world' or, to take something widely different, in 'The Country Sunday,' when describing the villagers going to chapel in their best clothes 'all out of drawing, and without a touch that could be construed into a national costume—the cheap shoddy shop in the country lane.' The curious anticipations of D. H. Lawrence here are widespread in his mature work and suggest both how original his outlook was and what direction his gifts might have taken had he lived (he died at thirty-eight). Nothing came to him through literature, he is as unliterary as Cobbett though of greater personal cultivation and finer native sensibility; a contemporary suggested, says Thomas, that he avoided literary society deliberately in order to preserve his native endowments. And he is an artist in another sense, that compared with his works his life has little interest—all of him that holds value for us exists complete in his writings. He left no revealing letters, he did not mix in any kind of society, his domestic life was happy and normal.

Why he has not got into the literary histories (Elton does not mention him, Saintsbury is fatuous, subsequent historians have followed one or the other) and the university courses in literature is a mystery, but reason seems to have no hand in deciding these things. Yet as a source of evidence for 'background' courses he is surely more reliable as well as more original than the novelists, as an essayist he has surely more claim to be studied as literature than all these Lambs and Paters, and as a novelist himself he cannot be ignored where Hardy is studied (unless on quantitative grounds). Jefferies wrote four novels of permanent worth as well as some negligible ones. I have mentioned *After London*, which is written in Jefferies' mature style—the superb opening describing 'The Relapse Into Barbarism' as the wild supplanted the cities should be a well-known piece. *Greene Ferne Farm* is the best of his early novels, comparable with the Hardy of *Under the Greenwood Tree*, while the most ambitious and novel-like of his later attempts, *The Dewy Morn*, reaches out towards D. H. Lawrence.

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The contrast between the maturity and originality of the content and Jefferies' clumsiness in manipulating the devices of the novel form is striking and may put off many readers. But the clumsiness is merely indifference, and when in *Amaryllis at the Fair* (another unfortunate title) he found a form that could convey all he was interested in treating without obliging him to satisfy the conventional demands on the novelist, he produced a masterpiece. But both *Greene Ferne Farm* and *The Dewy Morn* are too good to be let stay out of print. The Victorian features of these novels bulk at least as largely in Hardy's novels, but it is only in Jefferies' that the vitality and genuineness of the rest makes that conventional idiom appear ludicrous ; most people seem able to read *The Return of the Native* with its ' Do you brave me, madam's? ' without any feeling of incongruity between the melodrama of the parts and the total ' tragic ' effect. But in Jefferies' novels the best parts are better and more mature than the best parts of most of Hardy's. The portrayer of rustic life who notes the village woman telling the welfare-worker who scolds her for her fecundity: ' That's all the pleasure me an' my old man got ' and describes (in *Greene Ferne Farm*) old Andrew Fisher with his *Wuthering Heights* past receiving the clerical suitor for his grand-daughter's hand thus:

> ' " Jim! Bill! Jock! " shouted the old man, starting out of his chair, purple in the face. " Drow this veller out! Douse un in th'hog vault! Thee nimity-pimity odd-me-dod! I warn thee'd like my money! Drot thee and thee wench! " '

is not a novelist who could conventionalize his villagers for purposes of humorous relief as Hardy does. In *The Dewy Morn* he goes further than any Victorian novelist towards the modern novel—I mean the novel that seems to have significance for us other than as a mirror of manners and morals ; I should describe it as one of the few real novels between *Wuthering Heights* and *Sons and Lovers*. The final justification for asking the twentieth century to read Jefferies is, in Edward Thomas's fine words, that ' His own character, and the characters of his men and women, fortify us in our intention to live.' And we are more in need of fortification now than when those words were written.

We are now waiting for some sensible publisher to launch the Wiltshire Edition of Jefferies' Collected Works, preferably at

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3/6 apiece—Jefferies must be more or less out of copyright now—with Jefferies' wood-anemone-leaf signature stamped on the covers. It should lead off with Thomas's Life, follow with *Greene Ferne Farm* and *Amaryllis* in one volume, third *The Dewy Morn*, then the other out-of-prints (*Toilers of the Field, Red Deer, The Hills and the Vale*) then those not available in cheap editions (*Hodge, Field and Hedgerow*), then all the rest. Those essays that have never been reprinted might be dug up from the nineteenth-century magazines he wrote for, and collected for us, perhaps by Mr. Adrian Bell. Mr. Williamson is not to be allowed, as two publishers have here allowed him, to print his barn-owl device with Jefferies' wood-anemone on the title-pages (though he says ' I know you won't mind [Jefferies]') ; he or anyone else is to have no finger in it. Jefferies needs no editor to stand between us and him and to interpret him by the light of petty egotism, he needs only to be available entire in a cheap and attractive form together with Edward Thomas's book. I am sure this publisher would not lose his money.

Q. D. LEAVIS.

SHAKESPEARE'S LAST PLAYS

SHAKESPEARE'S LAST PLAYS, by E. M. W. Tillyard (Chatto and Windus, 3/6).

There is still plenty of room for a good book on Shakespeare's last plays. That is the conclusion forced upon one by a reading of the influential opinions assembled by Dr. Tillyard in his opening chapter. Lytton Strachey thought Shakespeare was ' bored ' ; a mass of academic opinion still clings to the comforting and labour-saving view that the plays show him in his last period as an opportunistic imitator of Fletcher ; E. K. Chambers, supporting his theory by a palpable misdating of *Timon of Athens*, postulates the victim of a nervous breakdown. Dr. Tillyard is rightly dissatisfied with all these suggestions. ' There is no lack of vitality, Shakespeare is not bored with things ; and my conviction of this springs from the rhythms, the imagery, in fact from those most intimate poetical qualities about which it is futile to argue.' (p. 3). For the moment, if we read a little carelessly, we are encouraged to read on. There is something to be hoped from a critic who

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proposes, as it seems, to discuss the last plays in terms of the 'rhythms, the imagery.' It may even be possible, that instead of being imposed upon by the usual griefs, sentimentalities, or vexations of the undisciplined reader, we are about to hear something of what 'Shakespeare was trying to do.'

We are disappointed; the most that can be said is that, if we learn practically nothing about Shakespeare's last plays, the gap remains unfilled by any intimate personal relation on the part of the critic: which is, perhaps, in itself something of a novelty. Indeed, looking back on the passage in which Dr. Tillyard points to the rhythms and imagery of the last plays as vindicating their freshness, we realize that we had no right to expect any detailed or connected account of their significance; for these are things 'about which it is futile to argue.' To argue, maybe; to analyse, to correlate, to discuss, certainly not. The whole of this book is based upn similar evasions of the hard work of painstaking and sensitive analysis, evasions made all the more apparent by occasional suggestions that the task is actually being undertaken. We are told (p. 23) that some of the versification of *Pericles* 'is important for our present purposes'; but immediately below we are fobbed off with a description of it as 'that simple, yet strained, remote and magical note that sounds from time to time in the last plays and helps to give them their unique character.' One would have thought that the only excuse for writing yet another book on Shakespeare at this date would have been an attempt to define this 'unique character,' to relate it to the complex elements in Shakespeare's developing experience which only faithful and close attention to the quality of his verse can hope to isolate. One does not have to read far into this book to realize that Dr. Tillyard's remarks about language, verse, and rhythm, are nothing more than vague gestures of conciliation towards a type of criticism he does not understand. Having made them, he invariably and immediately slips back into more congenial academic coinage: 'I begin with a certain conception of tragedy' (p. 16). We are back once more at the donnish conception of Aristotle, which is blissfully unaware of the fact that it was precisely thus that Aristotle did *not* begin. Aristotle began with the fact of certain existing tragedies, and deduced principles from them; Dr. Tillyard starts from abstract principles, and forces Shakespeare's plays to conform to them.

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We are given as a starting-point nothing concrete, nothing directly connected with Shakespeare, but a general theory into which the facts have to fit. Indeed, the number and diversity of these facts becomes a little alarming ; it seems that the tragic pattern of ' reconstruction after disintegration,' common to Shakespeare and Æschylus, is ' a process repeated by Milton when he supplemented *Paradise Lost* with *Samson Agonistes* ' (p. 20). It is even possible to find tragedy in *Lycidas* (p. 18) ; in what sense this is so, and what kind of ' reconstruction ' is represented by the arid tonelessness of *Samson*, is presumably known to Dr. Tillyard as the author of ' *Milton*, a book recognized as a standard work.'

I do not intend to deny, by these remarks, the importance of the balance of destruction and reconstruction in the last plays, and particularly in *The Winter's Tale*. It is the theoretical basis of Dr. Tillyard's speculations which needs to be challenged, because by distracting his attention from the subtleties in Shakespeare's text, it makes him unable to see that it is not the abstract pattern, but the richness and complexity of the experience which forms that pattern, which counts. Dr. Tillyard misses most of the point in his discussion of the great pastoral scene in *The Winter's Tale*. Regarding Perdita simply as ' the play's main symbol of the powers of creation ' (in which there is an element of truth), he neglects the part played in the scene by the impotent jealousy of the aged Polixenes (' I'll have thy beauty scratched with briars '), neglects the wilting quality in the great speech about ' violets *dim* ' and—

> pale primroses
> *That die unmarried*, ere they can behold
> Bright Phœbus in his strength—a *malady*
> Most incident to maids,

neglects above all the revulsion against natural processes implied in—

> I'll not put
> The dibble in earth to set one slip of them ;
> No more than were I painted I would wish
> This youth should say 'twere well, and only therefore
> Desire to breed by me.

None of these passages reads like a ' simple and unashamed confession of wholesome sensuality ' (p. 45); but it may be that Shakes-

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peare's interest in the problems raised by ' wholesome sensuality ' went deeper than Dr. Tillyard, starting from his pre-conception of the tragic pattern, can readily imagine. The lengths to which he is prepared to go in imposing this pattern upon the plays may be seen by reading his remarks upon *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (pp. 63, 64)—' Perhaps the normal poetic method is to strive to give some sort of unity to whatever planes of reality are to apprehended. Something of this sort may be found in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Here are presented sets of people whose sense of the normal must in some degree differ: royalty and rustics, lovers and fairies. And the whole play is devoted to creating kinship between the different sets. Bottom in his own way is as much a prince as Theseus ; the fairies, for all their exemption from certain human limitations, are as subject to human frailty as mankind.' To suggest that Bottom is a kind of dramatic inversion of Theseus is, in view of the later relation between court and tavern scenes in *Henry IV*, an interesting idea (I have not read the play recently enough to discuss it) ; but to envelop what *might* be a valid dramatic observation in misty talk about ' planes of reality ' is to obscure a point that might have been worth making.

One might deduce from this book alone that Dr. Tillyard is connected with Cambridge, where he has evidently been assiduously keeping to touch with the latest developments. Only so can we explain, for example, the various quotations, all more or less irrelevant, from Virginia Woolf (pp. 61, 63) and D. H. Lawrence (pp. 36-40) ; only so can we account for the occasional suggestions of exact criticism, based on rhythms and imagery, suggestions, however, which invariably tail off into generalizations such as those about Imogen's character (pp. 29-32), Iago's devilry (p. 44), and Othello's final 'regeneration' (p. 21). Stripped of these borrowings, however, it is hard to feel that Dr. Tillyard's qualifications differ essentially from those exhibited, say, by M. R. Ridley in his recent handbook to Bradley's theories. One may even find the Ridley book preferable on account of its lack of covert pretension. However that may be, both books are likely to be, to some extent, ' authoritative,' and it is discouraging to consider the sapping of vital interest in Shakespeare's work which this probability indicates.

D. A. TRAVERSI.

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RACINE

RACINE, by Jean Giraudoux, translated by P. Mansell Jones (Gordon Fraser, Cambridge, 3/6).

This book is a translation of an essay which was first published in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* for December 1929). M. Giraudoux states his case in his opening sentence:

> ' It is satisfying to think,' he writes, ' that the foremost writer in the literature of France is not a moralist or a scholar or a general or even a king, but a man of letters.'

His aim apparently is to present Racine as the absolute man of letters, completely detached from the life of his own age, pouring out great poetry in a vacuum. We are invited to believe that Racine deliberately turned his back on his own century and its religious battles in order to exercise his genius in a purely ' literary ' world of classical legend. M. Giraudoux reminds us that Racine ' orders his grave not at the feet of a saint, but at the feet of the man who taught him Greek roots ' and concludes from this that ' There is not a sentiment in Racine which is not a literary sentiment.'

The whole essay reads like a colossal *tour de force*. It is difficult to know whether we are meant to take the presentation of Racine as a glorified Giraudoux seriously, or whether it is simply intended as a joke at the expense of Racine's academic critics and perhaps at the expense of the more serious-minded readers of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. Readers who know their Racine will almost certainly find it irritating. As an introduction to Racine it is likely to prove extremely misleading because it amounts to a serio-comic presentation of the idea that a good many people still have of Racine. For this reason some of M. Giraudoux's more debatable views need to be discussed. On p. 7 he writes:

> ' Of all the great questions which the movements of thought or which circumstances or simply fashion raises during his time and which leave their mark even in the letters of Mme. de Sévigné—not only is Racine never inspired, he has not allowed one of these things to penetrate his inner life.'

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No one who remembers the versified exposition of Cartesian philosophy which Dryden puts into Adam's mouth in *The State of Innocence* could possibly think that topical allusion or, as M. Giraudoux prefers to call it, ' inspiration ' of this kind is a sign of the vital contact that a great writer ought to have with his age, nor will he attach any importance to its absence from Racine's poetry. The really great writer is always rooted in the life of his time, and though these roots may not be visible on the surface Racine is no exception to the rule. Perhaps if M. Giraudoux were less addicted to those sleights of hand which make French criticism so exasperating, he might have found an answer—though not the answer he wanted to find—in a comparison between Racine and Corneille.

> ' Contrary to what happens in Corneille,' he writes, ' the character in Racine is always more important that the drama, and the drama does not seem to be, as people have said, the final crisis or paroxysm of the passion of his heroes, but their habitual state.'

That is only half the truth. A play like *Cinna* is dominated by the conception of a social order of which there is no trace in Racine. It is not because M. Giraudoux's theory is true. Although they lived in the same century, Corneille and Racine belonged to different ages. Corneille was the last poet of the old order, Racine the first poet of the new. The difference can be seen in Racine's verse. One of the characters in *Andromaque* cries:

> Car enfin n'attends pas que mes feux redoublés
> Des périls les plus grands puissent être troublés.
> Puisqu'après tant d'efforts ma résistance est vaine,
> *Je me livre en aveugle au destin qui m'entraîne.*

Unlike Corneille Racine works at two levels. His elegance is the product of a supremely civilized society, but beneath its polished surface there is what can only be described as an extraordinary dissolution of feeling. The characters simply abandon themselves blindly to ' destiny ' which means passion entirely uncontrolled by any sort of principle. This impulse, which is clearly discernible in Racine's poetry, accurately reflects the society in which he was living.

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Although it was outwardly stable, that sense of social solidarity which was behind all Corneille's greatest work had gone and society had begun to disintegrate from within. In Corneille the conflict centres in the adjustment of the individual to a scheme: when we get to Racine the scheme has already disappeared. His poetry marks the transition to the new individualism. His heroes are not social beings like Corneille's: they are exiles and outcasts who have lost their bearings as completely as Frédéric Moreau or any other nineteenth-century hero. Some of Racine's loveliest lines express this sense of being cut off from the rest of humanity by frustrated passion.

> Il fallut s'arrêter, et la rame inutile
> Fatigua vainement une mer immobile.

In the celebrated line from *Bérénice*

> Dans l'Orient désert quel devint mon ennui!

huge vistas of desolation unfold before us and the one word, *désert*, welds the desolation of man and the desolation of nature.

'Literary explanations and commentaries,' observes M. Giraudoux, 'are the only ones which permit of approach to the poet, the only ones to which he would willingly have listened.' M. Giraudoux's own 'literary explanations and commentaries' are not impressive.

> 'Never did genitives express more delicately and imperiously dependence, or possessives possession, or relatives relation. All Racine's words have, like Racine himself, been withdrawn from the world for twenty years in passionate solitude and chastity and the meetings effected between the most ordinary terms have a nuptial value and reserve.'

Without illustrations writing of this sort is mere verbiage, and it is depressing to record that in an essay of thirty pages not a single line of Racine is quoted.

M. Giraudoux is of course entitled to have his joke, but whether in view of the present state of Racine criticism the joke is a timely one is another matter. There are good critics of English poetry for whom Racine is still a difficult poet and who (as one of them put it the other day) 'don't know what to hang on to in their

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reading.' It seems unlikely that M. Giraudoux will have much to offer them. Nor is it easy to suggest any very helpful alternatives. It is a curious fact that though French critics usually write well—sometimes surprisingly well—about Corneille, they seem to be much less successful with Racine. Whatever the causes of Racine's popularity at the present time, the brilliance of his critics is not one of them. Most of the older critics are almost exclusively concerned with character and plot—their books contain significantly a great many quotations from the Prefaces to the tragedies and practically none from the tragedies themselves—and are about as useful as Bradley on Shakespeare. Lemaître's lectures are historically important because they effectually disposed of the ' tender ' Racine of the nineteenth-century critics and they have had a considerable influence on later writers. Rivière's short chapter in a book called *Moralisme et littérature*[1] is, as far as I know, the finest piece of criticism of the poet that has been produced since the war. M. François Mauriac's *Vie de Jean Racine* is mainly concerned with the religious problem ; and though it is worth looking at, we may suspect that the portrait of the tormented Jansenist which emerges bears more resemblance to the author of *Destins* than it does to the author of *Phèdre*. What are we to say of the others? Only that M. Giraudoux's essay is rather better than Bremond's *Racine et Valéry* and certainly no worse than M. Thierry Maulnier's wordy treatise which carried off the criticism prize in 1935.

The difficulties that most of us have felt at one time or another with Racine can probably be reduced to vocabulary and diction. Words like *feux, flamme, courroux, haine* and *âme* recur with such frequency that they sometimes strike one as a poetic jargon which is not unlike the jargon of the weaker eighteenth-century poets in England. These words have of course been debased by later French poets and their impact has to some extent lost the freshness that it had for a seventeenth-century audience. It must be remembered, however, that society was such that these words did, as in Racine's poetry they still do, signify completely realized and often incomparably presented emotional states. This correspondence between words and the things they signify (Eliot's ' intellect at the

[1]Paris, 1932, pp. 26-41.

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tip of the senses') is always the sign of a very high degree of civilization; and it is a remarkable fact that as soon as civilization begins to decline language tends to lose its power of translating sensation into precise terms. The formal diction, which has seemed to some readers frigid and mechanical,[1] is perfectly adequate to Racine's experience and is in fact the vehicle of feelings whose incredible ferocity appalled Racine's own age as it fascinates ours. A character in *Andromaque* remarks with the utmost gentility of an enemy:

> Parmi les déplaisirs où son âme se noie,
> Il s'élève en la mienne une secrète joie.

When Andromaque in the same play rejects the suit of Pyrrhus, he retorts:

> Oui, mes voeux ont trop loin poussé leur violence,
> Pour ne plus s'arrêter que dans l'indifférence;
> Songez-y bien: il faut désormais que mon coeur,
> S'il n'aime avec transport, haïsse avec fureur.
> Je n'épargnerai rien dans ma juste colère:
> Le fils me répondra des mépris de la mère . . .

In these passages there is little trace of 'literary sentiment.' The analysis of emotion is pushed so far that it penetrates layers of feeling which are anterior to civilization and which even an extreme degree of civilization only covers, but cannot alter. It is the supreme technical accomplishment with which they are presented that enables Racine to upset the defences of his readers—the complicated system of conventional feelings and inhibitions which is the product of centuries of civilization—and to evoke the response that he wants.

The best way of testing the quality of Racine's poetry is to turn to the last speech of *Phèdre*, Act I, Sc. 3, from which the following lines are taken.

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[1]Something of the sort seems to be implied by Lawrence when he made Racine one of Clifford Chatterley's favourite authors. See *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (Paris, 1929 edition, pp. 163-5). The context is suggestive.

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Mon mal vient de plus loin. A peine au fils d'Egée
Sous les lois de l'hymen je m'étais engagée,
Mon repos, mon bonheur, semblait être affermi,
Athènes me montra mon superbe ennemi.
Je le vis, je rougis, je pâlis à sa vue ;
Un trouble s'éleva dans mon âme éperdue ;
Mes yeux ne voyaient plus, je ne pouvais parler,
Je sentis tout mon corps et transir et brûler.
Je reconnus Vénus, et ses feux redoutables,
D'un sang qu'elle poursuit tourments inévitables.
Par des voeux assidus je crus les détourner :
Je lui bâtis un temple, et pris soin de l'orner ;
De victimes moi-même à toute heure entourée,
Je cherchais dans leurs flancs ma raison égarée.
D'un incurable amour remèdes impuissants !

Phèdre has been lamenting her mysterious sickness. Then, towards the close of the scene, she suddenly tells her *confidente* what it is—she is madly in love with her stepson. The abrupt statement with which the speech opens has a curiously steadying effect. It gathers up the diffused emotions of the whole scene and focusses them on a single point—the definition of Phèdre's *mal*. The poet presents a picture of ordinary everyday married life which is shattered by the guilty passion. The alexandrines, with the verb pushed to the end of the second line, express perfectly the moral effort made by Phèdre to submit herself to ' the marriage yoke.' *Superbe*, with its suggestion of 'glamour' and 'romance,' is pitted against the humdrum, domestic associations of *engagée* and *affermi*. The sudden change of mood—*Athènes me montra*—gives an extraordinary sensation of the ' enemy ' being hurled into the attack on conventional life. The immediate surface reactions, the rapid changes of colour, are carefully registered ; but the physiological reactions are only the prelude to a profound psychological disturbance. There is an inward movement (admirably conveyed by *trouble* with its suggestion of water clouding over) and Racine begins to probe the deeper levels. The happiness, which appeared so solid and well-founded, crumbles at once and the clear-cut lines of *affermi* dissolve in the paroxysm suggested by one of Racine's favourite words, *éperdue*. The psychological disturbance

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is so tremendous that it provokes a fresh physical reaction expressed by *brûler* and *transir*. The analysis has now been pushed to its utmost possible limit—to the point at which it is no longer possible to differentiate between the various sensations and the result is a sort of psychological black-out. It is remarkable how the masterly compression of Racine's verse and the rapidity with which the changes of feeling follow one another contribute to the sense of complete spiritual and moral collapse that we get from the whole passage.

This impression is heightened by the return to lucidity in l. 9 and Phèdre's sudden realization that she is doomed. For the introduction of Venus is not a piece of classical decoration, but an instance of the way in which Racine adapts the classics. Venus is not something external to man, as she was for the Greeks, but a projection of his own passion which by this means becomes invested with a superhuman force. Once Venus appears, the issue is virtually decided. She is contrasted with the humdrum married life, and by a skilful shifting of the emphasis the *feux redoutables* are flung against the *bonheur . . . affermi*. It is significant that she attaches herself to the ' blood ' which is the seat of the primeval passions which Racine uncovers. The reference to the sacrifice is a stroke of irony. Phèdre is engaged in a superstitious game, but is herself the real ' victim.' The feverish, futile slaughter of the ' victims ' suggests her growing desperation. *Entourée* contains a sinister hint that Phèdre is being ' engulfed ' by passion, by ' the blood ' ; and *égarée* (another of Racine's favourite words) refers back to *éperdue* and intensifies the sickening sensation of dissolution we get from ll. 5-8. The whole thing is clinched by the despairing *remèdes impuissants*.

These lines seem to me to be a complete answer to the usual criticisms of Racine's diction and language. It is part of his greatness that the limitations of his medium become one of the sources of his strength. The alexandrine was not for him, as one feels that it sometimes was for Corneille, a constraint: it was a discipline which made possible an extremely *ordered* presentation of highly complex feelings. The lines are also a perfect illustration of the peculiar virtues of Racine's language. His method is completely different from that of most English poets. English poetry is remarkable for its imagery and for the accumulation of sense-perceptions.

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In Racine's lines there are no images and no accumulation. They owe everything to the extraordinary *precision* with which language renders the obscurest sensations ; and this language has a strange nudity which is unique in European literature.

This passage is a good example of the essentially destructive movement of Racine's verse which distinguishes him sharply from Corneille. In Corneille the conflict is between ' love ' and ' honour,' that is to say, between the instinctive life and certain intellectually held principles, which is resolved by a new synthesis between the two. Now in Racine there are no principles ; there is, as Rivière pointed out, a clash between two contrary waves of feeling which are both composed of the same ' stuff.' Thus for Phèdre her marriage and the domestic life are simply an emotional value and that is why it collapses so completely as soon as it comes in contact with a stronger emotion.

MARTIN TURNELL.

INTROSPECTION

FRENCH INTROSPECTIVES. From Montaigne to André Gide, by P. Mansell Jones (Cambridge University Press, 6/-).

' I should like to write a novel about nothing,' said Flaubert in one of his letters. French literature in the nineteenth century presents a curious spectacle. All through it runs a conflict between an insistence on the classic virtues of impersonality and objectivity and an overmastering desire for self-expression or, as Professor Mansell Jones calls it, ' introspection.' This conflict is apparent already in the novels of Balzac. Comparisons between Balzac and Shakespeare have been a commonplace of academic criticism since the publication of Taine's essay in 1858. The resemblances between the two writers, however, are superficial and misleading. It is true that Balzac seems at first to reveal a vast range of life ; but when we look into it, we find that his experience is not as *direct* as Shakespeare's or, to put it in another way, Balzac's personal sensibility is not co-extensive with his knowledge of life. The attitude behind the complicated panorama of the *Comédie humaine* is a simple and in some respects a naïve one. For Balzac's

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interest is concentrated on two or three themes—avarice, lust, magic—and his characters are no more than projections of these personal interests. They are oddly lop-sided beings in whom some faculties are abnormally developed and in whom others appear to be entirely lacking. And even Flaubert, great writer though he is, is still an author whose sensibility only touched life at certain points. There are large tracts in his novels—notably in *Salammbô* and *Bouvard et Pécuchet*—in which his sensibility ceases to function and one simply gets a monotonous catalogue of material things, a microscopic examination of the surface of life.

The causes of this state are not far to seek. The social unit was in the extreme stages of disintegration and the artist had come to feel himself an exile. But he was no longer a willing exile. The individualism of the Romantic Movement had turned out to be insufficient and the theories of the Parnassians and the Naturalists were an attempt by the artist to become part of the social organism again by discovering a common basis in material reality. It thus happens that the practice of some great writers was a flat contradiction of the theories which they professed. As a result of its inherent individualism, nineteenth-century literature is remarkable for the immense increase in the writer's knowledge of the human mind and in his power of translating obscure perceptions into words ; but the new subtlety is accompanied by the diminished capacity for what is commonly called living which strikes us alike in the work of Amiel, Flaubert and Laforgue. For the attempt to become part of the social organism ended, as it was bound to end, in failure. The poets and novelists of the period are not men who are writing with the weight of society behind them ; they are at variance with society, and this means that part of their talent is wasted on futile efforts at adjustment. The peculiar violence of Balzac's style, for example, shows that the writer is living in an age which fails to provide a proper outlet for his enormous vitality.

It is these tendencies which Professor Mansell Jones sets out to examine in his latest book. He is not directly concerned with imaginative literature but with the factors which determined the sort of literature that was in fact produced, and the most substantial parts of his book are the admirable studies of Montaigne and Amiel. He defines introspection as 'the disinterested investigation

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of the mind by itself' and distinguishes it from the systematic approach of the philosopher and the religious thinker and from the 'teleological or purposive self-analysis' of Maurice Barrès (whom he rates perhaps too highly).

'The initial difficulty with introspection,' as Professor Mansell Jones points out very pertinently, 'lies in the radical contradiction between the tension of inward awareness, its primary condition, and the demands of living which must be largely external and concrete.' It follows from this that introspection can only be truly healthy when there is a balance between the inner and the outer life, when the writer is a member of a society which provides proper scope for all his faculties and prevents self-analysis from becoming purely destructive, as it sometimes tends to become in modern literature. The superiority of Montaigne over Amiel is seen to consist precisely in this balance. 'It is with the appraisement of the self in adventurous or apprehensive movement that he is concerned, not with the self immobilized in dejection. The superiority of the revelation is its concern with a man very much alive, not with the semi-atrophied being that Amiel watched stiffening under the microscope.'

The distinction is an important one, but the criticism of Amiel is perhaps a little sweeping. It is true that 'Montaigne's interest in the self . . . is an interest in its moral and social *rapports*, never a purely scientific or 'psychological' investigation, never pure or purposeless introspection . . .' That Montaigne's work is never 'pure or purposeless introspection' is due in part to the fact that the society in which he lived was a stable one and that there was no conflict between the writer and his milieu. In discussing Amiel's 'failure' it is necessary to distinguish between the weaknesses which were inherent in the writer himself and the weaknesses which were largely induced by conditions over which he had no control. Professor Mansell Jones does not perhaps make sufficient allowance for this difference. 'While he has produced the largest *amount* of introspective writing,' he says of Amiel, 'actually his mind works in a relatively narrow circle, revolving round the mystery of the self without being able to pierce it.' Amiel is inferior *as a writer* to men like Montaigne, La Bruyère and La Rochefoucauld because he does not possess their peculiar clairvoyance and is condemned to revolve 'round

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the mystery of the self without being able to pierce it.' But the ' narrowness ' of his range and his curious flinching from life (which Professor Mansell Jones brings out well in his discussion of *Philine*) are failings that he shares with Flaubert and in a considerable degree with Proust.

It is rather disappointing that the book contains no chapter on Rousseau. Professor Mansell Jones is certainly right in maintaining that Rousseau's self-revelation is far more superficial than is generally thought, but the view he is criticizing is so widely held that a revaluation of the *Confessions* would have been extremely valuable. And whatever one's opinion of Rousseau as a writer, there is no doubt about his historical importance. A process of development, which had been going on for at least two hundred years, reached its term in the *Confessions* and virtually determined the direction taken by much of the literature of the nineteenth century that really counts. Moreover, Rousseau represents an interesting and important deviation from the French tradition because he is not honest about his feelings. He moralizes (and distorts) the *données* of the inner life and would, for this reason, have provided a more useful foil to Montaigne and Amiel than Sénancour who is studied as an example of the *faux intime*.

There is a chapter on the intimate diary of Maine de Biran which provides a useful introduction to a remarkable thinker who has not yet had his due in England. Here again, one feels, the book would have gained if the writer had said more of the *sens intime* (discussed in two papers in Maine de Biran's collected works) which would have helped to make clear the distinction between ' pure introspection ' and philosophical intuition.

It can be seen that in other hands a book of this sort might easily have turned into a barren and abstract discussion of its subject. It is successful precisely because the author avoids the faults attributed to him by Mr. Desmond MacCarthy in a singularly unfortunate article which appeared some weeks ago in the *Sunday Times*. The book is not, perhaps, literary criticism in the strict sense, but it does offer a fresh and extremely suggestive approach to the study of the literature of our own time ; and for this reason it is to be hoped that it will be widely read by students not only of French, but also of English literature.

M.T.

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BUNYAN THROUGH MODERN EYES

JOHN BUNYAN: MAKER OF MYTHS, by Jack Lindsay (Methuen, 10/6).

JOHN BUNYAN: MECHANICK PREACHER, by William York Tindall (Columbia University Press, 17/6).

Mr. Lindsay is Marxist and psycho-analytic. The arrival of his book reminded me of one on Bunyan that came out a couple of years ago, and in this earlier book now open before me (it is the second given above), I read (p. 94):

> 'For the saints too the class struggle needed the dignity of divine auspices, and as the miserable of to-day look for their sanction to Karl Marx and *The Communist Manifesto*, their seventeenth-century predecessors looked to Jesus and the Bible.
>
> 'The religious man may remain only half-aware, or by virtue of a rationalization, quite unaware of the social or economic motives which determine his sectarian allegiance.'

Mr. Lindsay and Mr. Tindall, then, in their modes of approach have something in common. But whereas Mr. Lindsay is mainly concerned to show that Bunyan's religion was merely a self-uncomprehending reaction to the class-war, Mr. Tindall is mainly concerned to show that Bunyan was merely one of a mob—a large, ludicrous and Hudibrastic mob of preaching and scribbling fanatics:

> 'Bunyan was one of a great number of eloquent tinkers, cobblers and tailors; he thought what they thought, felt what they felt, and wrote according to their conventions; he was one of hundreds of literary mechanicks, and he can be considered unique only by his survival to our day as the sole conspicuous representative of a class of men from whom he differed less in kind than in degree.' (viii).

While Mr. Lindsay's 'merely' has the intention of exalting, the intention as well as the effect of Mr. Tindall's is the reverse. It is true he speaks of Bunyan's 'genius,' but what this consists in he gives no sign that he knows or cares. As for the superiority in 'expression': 'The qualities of style for which Bunyan is esteemed to-day,' he says, 'his raciness, earthiness, and familiarity were

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common to his kind, and are not easily to be distinguished from those of other mechanicks.' And any other superiority there may be doesn't impress Mr. Tindall. His set attitude expresses itself in the heavy Gibbonian affectation that (inspired, no doubt, by Lytton Strachey) he practises, with complacent insistence, as his own style:

> ' The ingenious speculations of Mr. Gerald Owst have been valuable in suggesting the sermons of Bunyan's time as the principle sources of his similitudes . . . Apparently at the impulse of the Spirit, Bunyan condescended to employ and to imitate for his imperishable works the materials of pamphlets, which are now as remote as they were once familiar, and of oral sermons, which are now, perhaps, recorded only in heaven.' (p. 196).

I still bear something of a grudge against *The New Republic* for having persuaded me, by a eulogistic review, to spend seventeen-and-six on such a book. The book has, nevertheless, a use. Mr. Tindall—and in this he has the advantage over Mr. Lindsay—is a scholar ; his book represents a disciplined and laborious research, and makes a ' genuine contribution to knowledge '—one in which, moreover, in spite of the obtuseness and the offensive tone, we may see some value. In demonstrating so thoroughly that Bunyan was one of a host, and how much he belonged to his environment, Mr. Tindall does, if not for himself, illuminate Bunyan's distinctive genius. And at the same time he tells us something about the genius of the English people in that age.

It is a richly fantastic background of fanaticism, bigotry and ignorance that is displayed for us in his account of the sectarian England of Bunyan's time. Here, for instance is a passage he quotes from a broadside called Divine Fire-Works:

> I have seen the Lord. The King ;
> Who appeared unto me
> On (Innocents Day) the 28 of the last moneth.
> He spake to me and with me . . .
> Then was I raised to sit up in my bed (in
> my shirt) smoaking like a furnace . . .
> Fear not it is I Blu I.

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> Whereupon the Spirit within me (with exceeding joy) exceedingly groaned ; & with a loud voice out-sounded
>
> O the Blu! O the Blu! O the Blu!
>
> And the worm, and no man said, what Blu . . .

That, of course, is a lunatic extreme, but lunatic extremes, Mr. Tindall brings home to us, were common—were, one is inclined to say, what sectarian enthusiasm tended towards. Bunyan, of course, was a Baptist (Particular Open-Communion) and not a Quaker, Ranter or antinomian extremist. But Mr. Tildall convincingly exhibits the world of fissiparous sects as one, and Bunyan and his works as essentially of it.

Where, then, did *The Pilgrim's Progress* get its classical quality from? Mr. Tindall talks vaguely about Bunyan's ' art,' and apparently sees in this nothing but a vividness and ' earthy vigour ' of style. But it is not merely vividness and vigour (though these it certainly has) that make *The Pilgrim's Progress* a classic—a classic in the fullest sense. And it is not merely a certain superiority in vividness and vigour so unemphatically conceded by Mr. Tindall to Bunyan that explains the following facts:

> ' By 1692, according to Charles Doe, about one hundred thousand copies of *Pilgrim's Progress* had been sold ; it had been translated into foreign tongues, and had surpassed by ninety thousand copies the combined sale of Benjamin Keach's two most popular allegories.'

The England of the Sects, in thus distinguishing in favour of Bunyan, confirms the conclusions about it that we are in any case led to by *The Pilgrim's Progress* itself—*The Pilgrim's Progress* being, as Mr. Tindall demonstrates, so completely and essentially representative (so essentially unoriginal, the implication almost is), and Bunyan so completely and essentially one of the mob of scribbling and preaching fanatics. That England, plainly, cannot be taken full account of in Hudibrastic (or Strachey-Gibbonian) terms ; something besides fanaticism, bigotry and ignorance has to be invoked. For what makes *The Pilgrim's Progress* a great book, one of the great classics, is its humanity—its rich, poised and mature humanity. And this is not the less impressive for our being, here and there, by the allegorical intent of this and that

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incident, reminded of the uglier and pettier aspects of the intolerant creed, the narrow Calvinistic scheme of personal salvation, that Bunyan explicitly sets out to allegorize.

The Pilgrim's Progress, in fact, is the fruit of a fine civilization ; the enthusiasts and mechanick preachers were not out of touch with a traditional wisdom. Bunyan as a popular homilist was, as Mr. G. R. Owst (in *Literature and Pulpit in Mediæval England*) has sufficiently shown, in a tradition that goes uninterruptedly back beyond the Reformation to the Middle Ages. If one observes that this tradition owes its vitality to a popular culture it must be only to add that the place of religion in the culture is obvious enough. The same people that created the English language for Shakespeare's use speaks in Bunyan, though it is now a people that knows its Authorized Version.

Mr. Tindall, however, has no use for these supersubtleties ; he can explain Bunyan's art more simply :

> ' To Bunyan the name By-Ends connoted ends other than that of salvation by imputed righteousness . . . By-ends is the product of the resentment against the Anglicans of an enthusiastic evangelist and despised mechanick . . . Bunyan's fortunate discovery that through these controlled debates between his hero and these caricatured projections of his actual enemies he could experience the pleasures of combat without the complications of reality invests *Pilgrim's Progress* with the character of a controversial Utopia.' (60-62).

And that's what Mr. Tindall sees in By-Ends. There seems some point in quoting here what should be one of the best-known passages of Bunyan :

> *Christian :* Pray, who are your Kindred there, if a man may be so bold?
>
> *By-ends :* Almost the whole Town ; and in particular, my Lord *Turn-about*, my Lord *Timeserver*, my Lord *Fair-speech*, (from whose ancestors that Town first took its name), also Mr. *Smoothman*, Mr. *Facing-both-ways*, Mr. *Anything* ; and the Parson of our Parish, Mr. *Two-tongues*, was my Mother's own Brother by Father's side ; and to tell you the truth,

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I am become a Gentleman of good Quality ; yet my Great Grandfather was but a Waterman, looking one way and rowing another ; and I got most of my estate by the same occupation.

Christian : Are you a married man?

By-ends : Yes, and my Wife is a very virtuous woman, the Daughter of a virtuous woman ; she was my Lady *Faining's* daughter, therefore she came of a very honourable Family, and is arrived to such a pitch of breeding, that she knows how to carry it to all, even to Prince and Peasant. 'Tis true we somewhat differ in Religion from those of the stricter sort, yet but in two small points: First, we never strive against Wind and Tide: Secondly, we are always most zealous when Religion goes in his Silver Slippers ; we love much to walk with him in the Street, if the Sun shines, and the People applaud him.

That is plainly traditional art and, equally plainly the life in it is of the people (not the less so for there being literary associations too). The names and racy turns are organic with the general style, and the style, concentrating the life of popular idiom, is the expression of popular habit—the expression of a vigorous humane culture. For what is involved is not merely an idiomatic raciness of speech, expressing a strong vitality, but an art of social living, with its mature habits of valuation. We must beware of idealizing, but the fact is plain. There would have been no Shakespeare and no Bunyan if in their time, with all its disadvantages by present standards, there had not been, living in the daily life of the people, a positive culture which has disappeared and for which modern revolutionaries, social reformers and Utopists do not commonly project any serious equivalent.

Contemplating one aspect of this past order Mr. Tindall remarks that

> ' the economic opinions of Bunyan, Baxter and the Quakers were the last moral vestiges of the Middle Ages.'

This aspect causes some embarrassment to Mr. Lindsay, who as a Marxist has to recognize that Bunyan (though of course we have to

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cheer him for standing up for his class) was wrong in opposing the development of the new economic order and trying to hold up the dialectic and hinder the growth of a proletariat: it was the rising bourgeoisie, trading, industrialist and capitalist, that was 'doing the work of history'. But Mr. Lindsay has no difficulty in making Bunyan's religious preoccupations respectable by reducing them, with the help of psycho-analysis and history, to explanation in terms of class-relations and methods of production. This last is an ugly sentence; but Mr. Lindsay's idiom doesn't lend itself to elegant or lucid summary. Here are representative passages (the argument of the book consists of the repetitive development—if that is the word, and perhaps the musical sense conveys the right suggestion—of such formulations):

> 'The sense of unity, developed by the productive advance with its intensified socialization of method, cannot in such conditions be actualized. What would actualization mean? It would mean that social relationships would be made as harmoniously coherent as the methods of production. But that is impossible in a class-society.
>
> 'Therefore the sense of unity is abstracted.
>
> 'So it is felt that if only a perfectly concordant scheme of son-father relationship can be imagined, this abstraction will balance the loss of unity in actual life. The religious intuition thus glosses over, emotionally cements, the discord between social relationship and productive methods.' (38)

Bunyan, according to Mr. Lindsay (p. 192)

> 'wanted to get outside the cramping, distorting social discord of his day into the fuller life of fellowship.'

Though Mr. Lindsay talks of 'fuller life' he proffers emptiness; like most Marxist writers who undertake to explain art and culture, he produces the effect of having emptied life of content and everything of meaning.

It is impossible in any case to believe that the classless society produced by the process that the Marxist's History has determined on could have a cultural content comparable with that represented by *The Pilgrim's Progress*. And Mr. Lindsay almost goes out of his way to bring home to us without realizing it the problem of the religious sanction:

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'The world of light is not the land of death. It is the future of fellowship. The tale tells of the passage from privation and obstruction to light and joy and plenty. The heaven-symbol is brought down from beyond-death ; it becomes a symbol of what earth could be made by fellowship.

'Thus the allegory, which superficially is a story of how to die, is a stimulus to further living.' (192).

It's all quite simple—for Mr. Lindsay. But Bunyan, he points out, is muddled ; he can't really see that it's as simple as that. For instance:

'He makes Christiana wade over the river at the end and leave her children behind. The picture is ridiculous. Here are husband and wife rushing off to death as the consummation of their purpose, yet the children are left to wander about on the banks of the death-river before they too are allowed to get over into heaven.

'Bunyan here confessed his sense that something was wrong about the idea of death as the goal of life.' (193)

Mr. Lindsay, of course, has no sense of betraying here the shallowness of his own ideas of life and death. But who with any wisdom to offer worth listening to could have published that as his reaction to the incomparable end of Part Two of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, where the pilgrims, waiting by the river, receive one by one the summons to cross?—Incomparable, for where else in prose can a like sustained exaltation be found?

'When the time was come for them to depart, they went to the Brink of the River. The last words of Mr. Dispondency were, *Farewell Night, welcome Day*. His daughter went through the River singing, but none could understand what she said.'

'Then it came to pass a while after, that there was a Post in the town that enquired for Mr. Honest. So he came to his house where he was, and delivered to his hand these lines, *Thou art commanded to be ready against this day seven-night to present thyself before thy Lord at his Father's house*. And for a Token that my Message is true, *All thy Daughters of Musick shall be brought low*. Then Mr. Honest called for his Friends, and said unto them, I die, but shall make no Will. As for my Honesty,

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> it shall go with me ; let him that comes after be told of this. When the day that he was to be gone was come, he addressed himself to go over the River. Now the River at that time overflowed the Banks in some places, but Mr. Honest in his life-time had spoken to one Good-conscience to meet him there, the which he also did, and lent him his hand, and so helped him over. The last words of Mr. Honest were, Grace reigns. So he left the World.'

So it goes on, for pages, without a false or faltering note. It would be useless here arguing with anyone who contended that the inspiration here was essentially a Utopian vision of what ' the earth might be made by fellowship.' Whatever of that element there may be in it, the whole effect is something far more complex and mature. It is something, clearly, that could not be reproduced to-day. Yet *The Pilgrim's Progress* must leave us asking whether without something corresponding to what is supremely affirmed in that exaltation, without an equivalently sanctioned attitude to death that is at the same time ' a stimulus to further living ' (the contradiction that Mr. Lindsay sees), there can be such a thing as cultural health.

* * * *

Though Part Two has that marvellous ending the general reading of Bunyan confirms the pre-eminence that the world has agreed to recognize in Part One of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Part Two is, at the same time a surprisingly worthy sequel ; and, what suggests the extraordinary variety and suppleness of Bunyan's art, while Part Two ends with that exaltation it is on the other hand more like a novel than Part One is. Bunyan's potentialities as a novelist come out even more, of course, in *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*, which deserves to be the current classic it is supposed to be but hardly is. *The Holy War* contains many fine things, but will never be current again. *Grace Abounding* will remain the classical document that fewer read through than take up.

Mackail's essay is the best literary criticism on Bunyan I remember to have read.

F. R. LEAVIS.

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PHILOSOPHY AND THE PHYSICISTS

PHILOSOPHY AND THE PHYSICISTS, by L. Susan Stebbing (Methuen, 7/6).

'One of the most unprofitable of all forms of reading' was the verdict some years ago of Mr. J. N. W. Sullivan, whose opinion in this matter should carry some weight, on popular works on science.[1] The task with which Miss Stebbing has saddled herself in her latest book is that of demonstrating, by means of an analysis of the more popular works of Jeans and Eddington, the plain truth of this statement. This is by no means the first occasion upon which such an attempt has been made, though never perhaps has it been made with such thoroughness and upon so large a scale. In *The Scientific Outlook*, otherwise one of his least satisfactory works, Mr. Bertrand Russell made a lively, if not particularly detailed, attack upon the 'idealistic' tendencies of Eddington's excursions into philosophy; Professor Joad's *Philosophical Implications of Modern Science* is perhaps of greater value than professional philosophers have been willing to recognize; and no reader of this periodical is likely to forget the brilliant article by Mr. J. L. Russell, entitled *The Scientific Best Seller* (republished in *Determinations*), compared with which Miss Stebbing's first chapter, where many of the same points are raised, is perhaps a trifle inconclusive. Not that Miss Stebbing's book bears the least trace of hasty compilation; I should describe it as over- rather than under-written. It is simply that the task she has set herself—I used the word 'saddled' just now with deliberation—precludes anything but the briefest reference to personal beliefs and opinions. Admittedly there are places—the Chapter on Free-Will, for example, and the extremely interesting but highly compressed conclusion—where something more in the nature of positive affirmation would have been welcomed. This, however, is not a criticism of the book; it is merely an invitation to the author to write another. Towards the end there are hints, or statements that may be construed as hints, that this is in fact her intention.

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[1] *But for the Grace of God*, p. 41.

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Philosophy and the Physicists, then, is not easy reading; unlike many of the objects of its attack, it cannot be said to 'read like a novel.' And in spite of the obvious care with which it is written, the quality of the chapters tends to be unequal. In places, the book gives the impression—perhaps as a result of the 'over-writing' of which I spoke—of having been laid aside at odd intervals, to be taken up again at some later time with recovered zest. Chapter III, for example, entitled 'Furniture of the Earth,' opens with an introduction of perhaps somewhat unnecessary elaboration, whose purpose, it subsequently turns out, is merely to illustrate the manner in which the common reader might 'describe his experiences in the familiar world that he inhabits'; both Chapter VII and Chapter X, on the other hand, the one entitled 'The Nineteenth Century Nightmare' and the other 'Human Freedom and Responsibilty,' which give the impression of having been designed to lead up to some fundamental contention, end, like exhausted gramophones, with a sudden diminuendo. What remains impressive about the book, however, is a pains-taking attention to detail that reminds one, with due allowances for differences of approach, of Mill's examination of Sir William Hamilton and even of Broad's colossal dossier on McTaggart; a task to which the author, one of the most acute minds in present-day philosophy, has brought the whole weight of her training and experience in philosophical analysis. Although intended for philosophers and 'that section of the reading public who buy in large quantities and, no doubt, devour with great earnestness the popular books written by scientists for their enlightenment,' the book is unlikely to receive the attention (I should say that the section mentioned above is unlikely to patronize it to the extent that the author thinks) enjoyed by the objects of its attack. That may not turn out to be so very important. What matters is not so much that the general public shall read it, as that they shall be informed that it has been written. There is of course a section of the community, not directly referred to by Miss Stebbing, into whose minds the substance of this work should be forcibly propelled: I refer to the host of Bishops, curates who hope one day to be Bishops, Headmasters who conceive of their function as analagous to that of Bishops, and other ideological demagogues, who are responsible for so much of the prevailing vulgarization of scientific ideas.

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This is to be a review, not a digest ; and although one is tempted to cite a number of examples showing the quality of the author's perspicuity, only the most typical can here be mentioned. Miss Stebbing is at her best, perhaps, in pointing out the absurd reputation acquired by Heisenberg's Principle of Uncertainty as a means of bolstering up a jaded religious faith. ' It is odd,' she writes (page 285), ' to find that the view that "all is mysterious" is to be regarded as a sign of hope. The rejection of the " billiard-ball view " of matter does not warrent the leap to any form of Idealism. Surely a view that finds a place for Mind in the universe only after the principle of uncertainty has been discovered or after abstruse physical speculations have made of physics a science not " understanded of the people " is not a view that should commend itself to the earnest seeker after God, especially if that seeker be a Christian. At least, I should have thought not, were it not that Christian apologists have been so eager to wait upon the pronouncements of the physicists, so thankful to be assured that we put into Nature the laws we profess to discover and, finally, that the chairs we sit on are not solid.'

That Eddington should have re-christened Heisenberg's Principle (or perhaps we should say christened, since the principle is regarded as having such value in the vindication of spiritual reality) the Principle of *Indeterminacy* is not without significance ; for the new title contains within itself implications not present within the old—implications not merely of pervasive inaccuracy, but of vagueness and, with another slight twist, inherent mystery. ' Heisenberg now makes it appear,' says Jeans, ' that nature abhors accuracy and precision above all things.' Such a statement is, as the author points out, both the result and the cause of serious confusion. To suppose ' that the uncertainty relations show that there is anything *indeterminate* in nature or that science has now become inaccurate ' is not merely to jump to a conclusion, but to take a most hazardous leap in the dark. ' Granted that in a given case the initial conditions are determined as precisely as the Principle of Uncertainty permits, then the probability of all subsequent states is determined by *exact laws* . . . There is nothing *lawless* in quanta phenomena.' (p. 183).

A no less unfortunate confusion is present in Eddington's conception of the nature of scientific method. To construct a

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' symbolic world ' which, though logical and coherent in itself, shall somehow ' shadow ' the world of everyday experience, and in ' shadowing ' it—rather in the manner that a detective shadows a suspect—shed some light upon its nature: that, according to Eddington, is the physicists' conception of the primary object of science. What is the point of this symbolic construction. Miss Stebbing succeeds in adducing three possible alternatives. Either the construction is an *imitation* of the familiar world, or it is intended to be more *real* than the familiar world, or finally it is a means whereby we can ' correlate certain selected elements in the familiar world,' to the end that we may extend and order what is sensibly experienced. The difficulty is to discover which of these alternatives is consistent with Eddington's argument. That the researches of physicists give us the ' real truth ' about the familiar world, is something that he takes an almost visible pleasure in questioning. And in view of his description of his method as being one ' by which we build up from its own symbolic elements a world which will imitate the actual behaviour of the world of familiar experience,' it seems clear that by Imitation he means something altogether different from the Aristotelian μίμησις, which, in tragedy for example, involved the portrayal of men ' as better than they are.' To the third alternative, if not perhaps to all of its implications, Eddington exhibits even greater antipathy than to the first ; with the result that he seems finally to hover between the first two without committing himself wholeheartedly to either ; which involves him in innumerable confusions and imprecisions. Most of these blemishes would be removed if Eddington—whose mind, like that of Bosanquet, seems to be conditioned to the belief that what is self-evident must for that reason be false—were to overcome his objection to what is after all the obvious and rational view, namely, ' that physical science is concerned with one world, and with those aspects alone of what is sensibly perceived in it that are susceptible of metrical treatment. To put the point in this way would be to avoid the puzzling multiplications of ' worlds '—which have subsequently to be interlinked—and would also avoid the wholly baffling notion of a complex of metrical symbols as *shadowing* tables, stars, and eclipses. To put the point in this way is, however, not agreeable to Eddington. To conceive of the limitations of physical science as a restriction only of the scope

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of the science itself—a restriction necessitated by the aims of its research—would be to destroy the foundations of his metaphysic.' (p. 116).

No one, unless he is very sure of his ground, is going to dispute the scientific ability of either Eddington or Jeans. To issue a challenge of that kind certainly did not form part of the original intention of either Miss Stebbing or Mr. J. L. Russell. 'The fundamental objection to the modes of expression so dear to both Eddington and Jeans,' writes Miss Stebbing (p. 18) 'is not merely that they are unilluminating; it is that such writing obfuscates the common reader whilst pretending to enlighten him. These writers encourage the reader to believe that he has understood a theory when he has only been entertained by an irrelevant illustration.' In short, Miss Stebbing's book is concerned above all with the fundamental problems of language and communication. I do not think that it is as constructive as it might be (can we compromise, for example, between the method of exposition typified by the *Principia Mathematica* and the cheery baby-talk of Eddington?); but it at least sets the stage for a solution. There is no reason to complain if it demands that we should do some thinking for ourselves.

That Eddington is by no means unaware of the pitfalls in which his expository method is liable to involve him, is clear from his book *New Pathways in Science* (p. 279), where he discusses this difficulty freely. 'I take it,' he says, 'that the aim of such books [of popular scientific exposition] must be to convey exact thought in inexact language. The author has abjured the technical terms and mathematical symbols which are the recognized means of securing exact expression, and he is thrown back on more indirect methods of awakening in the mind of the reader the thought which he wishes to convey.' This contention is of considerable interest; and it raises a question to which reference may profitably be made in conclusion. In the first place, the distinction between employing technical terms and mathematical symbols, which are held to be 'the recognized means of securing exact expression,' and the method of 'awakening in the mind of the reader'—presumably by 'inexact language'—the thought to be conveyed, seems to me far from clear; one is restrained from wondering whether it is itself an example of 'exact thought in inexact

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language ' only by the reflection that such thought could hardly be rendered more precise by the employment of ' technical terms and mathematical symbols.' Secondly, it is not clear whether the ' means ' spoken of as capable of ' awakening in the mind the thought to be conveyed ' is ' inexact language ' itself or some other thing to which such language is a means. Such a question can be answered only if we are clear as to whether the ' thought ' to which the reader is thereby awakened is *exact* thought (distinguished from thought conveyed by symbols and technical terms merely by the method of conveyance) or thought of a less pure variety. In the former case, it is difficult to see wherein the superiority of technical terms and symbols over ' inexact language ' consists ; in the latter case, it is difficult to see in what respect the result can be regarded as thought at all (inexact thought is error). For what precisely do we mean when we speak of ' inexact language '? Language, surely, is inexact to the extent that it fails to be an efficient medium of thought. To hold that language is aiming at an exactitude such that failure to achieve it results in an inexactitude of anything but thought, is impossible. The attempt to express ' exact thought in inexact language ' is simply an attempt to express something accurately by means of that which is by definition incapable of so expressing it ; the inexactitude of the *language* will be nothing but the measure of its incapacity to express the thought. We speak often of books that are well thought-out but ill-written—usually books by scientists ; but as Croce observes in his *Aesthetic*, this means merely that the composition of such works is unequal—in some places clear, in others diffuse. That thoughts can be both well ' thought-out ' and badly ' written-out ' is an idea the absurdity of which can be seen if we consider a single proposition: for how could a single proposition be both ill-thought but well-expressed, or both well-expressed and ill-thought?

Finally, we are tempted to question Eddington's assumption that, in employing the medium of ' inexact ' language, he is able to effect an ' awakening in the mind of the reader of the thought which he wishes to convey.' One's own experience of the kind of writing to which he refers is that, far from having the effect of rousing one from one's slumbers, it is the best possible soporific that could be devised. Possibly a greater offender in this

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respect than Eddington is Jeans, whose aim would sometimes appear to be not merely to induce sleep, but actually to hypnotise. The rhapsody on Cosmic Loneliness at the beginning of *The Mysterious Universe*, for instance, is not placed at the beginning for nothing ; it sets the theme, as it were, and induces a state of not altogether unpleasant *frissonnement* which the succeeding pages, with their presdigitation with the relative measurements of men and constellations, do nothing to allay. It seems, therefore, that what is conveyed by the ' inexact language ' for which Eddington can find no substitute is not ' exact thought ' at all, but rather something that not infrequently takes the form of a penumbra to inexact thought: I mean emotion. Not the *magnitude* of the ' infinite spaces ' terrified Pascal, but, as Mr. Eliot has pointed out, their *silence*. Not that it *loomed*, but that it was dumb, was the reason for de Vigny's horror of the empyrean. Perhaps, after all, the ' inexact language ' of Eddington is exactly suited to the purpose which it is intended to serve.

E. W. F. TOMLIN.

SCIENCE AND SOCIAL WELFARE IN THE AGE OF NEWTON, by G. N. Clarke (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 6/-).

This small book provides a very able survey of the position of science at a critical period in history. It is in fact a study in relationships and, apart from other commendable features, it has a particular value for the student and the layman in emphasizing the importance of relationships in development.

Specially interesting is the section assessing the influence of science on the life of the time, and of the reciprocal influence of other factors on the development of science. Some discussion is given to the premises of Professor B. Hessen's essay which attracted much attention in 1931 (' The social and economic roots of Newton's *Principia* ' in the symposium ' Science at the Cross-Roads '). This is subjected to further analysis in the course of which Professor Clarke presents a good case for the influence of six factors on the development of science. In distinction Hessen came to the conclusion that ' the scheme of physics was mainly

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determined by the economic and technical tasks which the rising bourgeoisie raised to the forefront.'

The various factors enumerated by Clarke can be seen to arise under analysis from an expansion of Hessen's conception of the social conditions of the period. They are, briefly: the economic pursuits of man which are typical of peacetime; the special economics and demands arising out of a state of war; the influence of medicine; of the arts; of religion; and lastly, an inquisitiveness which is probably not best described (as does Clarke) as a search for truth. The further analysis is indeed essential in order to see 'what complex interactions are cloaked by the statement that scientific progress is conditioned by the state of society.' Whilst arguments on these subjects are so often liable to hang on definitions (or their lack) of the terms in use, yet this must not be allowed to obscure the realization of the network of factors affecting any process of development. Too great an emphasis on the importance of the economic factors (shown by many recent Marxist writers) easily leads (to say the least of it) to an over-simplification of the problem and a failure to acknowledge the interplay of other factors which are integrally bound in the whole process. This, at least, seems to have been more fully realized by Marx and Engels than by some of their followers.

The dangers of 'isolation' in analysis must be guarded against and Clarke himself seems guilty of a false step in the statement (p. 73) that the driving factors behind scientific movement include not only economic impulsion but others 'radically independent of it.' Even though this phrase suggests that he did not realize the full implications of the analysis, not least of the value of his survey lies in a possibly unconscious demonstration that for each of the factors shown to influence scientific thought, it could be shown in turn that they were under the influence of the others. It is more than doubtful whether the present analysis has uncovered all the strands of the web, but, with these limitations, the survey should remain as a model for further work of the kind.

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THE YEAR'S POETRY, 1937, compiled by Denys Kilham Roberts and Geoffrey Grigson (The Bodley Head, 5/-).

Doubtless this anthology provides a representative cross-section of last year's poetic output and consequently has documentary value. Certainly, it reflects the various fashions now being worn in poetry—much of the verse seems no more than fashionable: we suspect it of being written rather from a desire to be in the swim than from any inner compulsion.

The book shows no evidence of the 'poetic revival' that is still talked of. The older poets do on writing in the same way, except that the Auden group seems to exercise a retrospective influence; these lines would not be immediately attributable to Mr. Church—

> Here at the inn, become anonymous!
> No longer the familiar bunch of keys
> Burdens my pocket.

Mr. Auden (with his contemporaries) has left the obscurity of the earlier manner for the propaganda-broadsheet style of his plays, though he is also represented by some sincere love poems. I don't deny that he handles the politico-familiar style very well: his poems are a relief to read in this book. He is one of the few poets represented who has something he wants to say, and a good idea of how to say it. None of his successors shows one-tenth of his talent.

The younger poets make the appropriate Left-wing responses, much too automatically. I should think many people must feel as I do about the type of versifier who rhapsodises on the Spanish war and his soul's salvation from a safe distance. Even their admissions of their own futility don't help—they don't really believe in it. I sympathize with Mr. Spencer who sees this point ('A Thousand Killed') and whose poems although almost comically innocent, are free from attitudinizing. It is significant, by the way, that unpretentiousness has become a positive virtue nowadays—a sufficient comment on the decay of standards, when someone is good if he is not bad.

There is, also, among the younger poets, a group of half-hearted surrealists, who don't quite want to go the whole hog, and so succeed in producing an almost ludicrously obvious 'escape'

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poetry—for instance, Mr. Scarfe's ' Defence of Gothic.' The unholy alliance between surrealism and communism is in evidence, and is more inexplicable than ever. It is possible that the escapist surrealists (compare ' dream paintings ') see Communism as Utopianism, but what do the Communists make of their strange bed-fellows?

All of which brings the obvious conclusion. Where there is no community of interest or background, everyone wanders on his own way (which is generally in the footsteps of someone else), and if a good poet, or even a good poem, happens, it is more luck than judgment. The poet remains an isolated phenomenon, and there don't seem to be many phenomena about just now.

FRANK CHAPMAN.

BOOKS ON MUSIC

OFFENBACH, by S. Kracauer (Constable, 18/-).
LA VIE PARISIENNE, by Sacheverell Sitwell (Faber and Faber, 3/6).
GUSTAV MAHLER, by Bruno Walter (Kegan Paul, 6/-).

The two books about Offenbach arrived too late to be noticed in connection with my essay on Wiéner in the last number of *Scrutiny*. The former gives an elaborate and depressing account of the Second Empire for the authenticity of which I'm qualified to vouch. Much spade-work is necessary before one can discover any references to Offenbach's music. Mr. Sitwell's book is mostly about ivy and crinolines. In one of the few brief interludes about Offenbach his ' comic genius ' is compared to that of Mozart.

Bruno Walter's book on Mahler was received some months ago but was held over in the hope that it might provoke a ' revaluation ' of Mahler's *œuvre*. This is now unlikely to appear for a considerable time. Walter's book is worth looking at because it is so intimate and personal a document but it isn't critically helpful because it refuses, with deliberate simplemindedness, to consider anything but the ' literary ' implications of Mahler's art. The translation is gauche.

W. H. MELLERS.

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